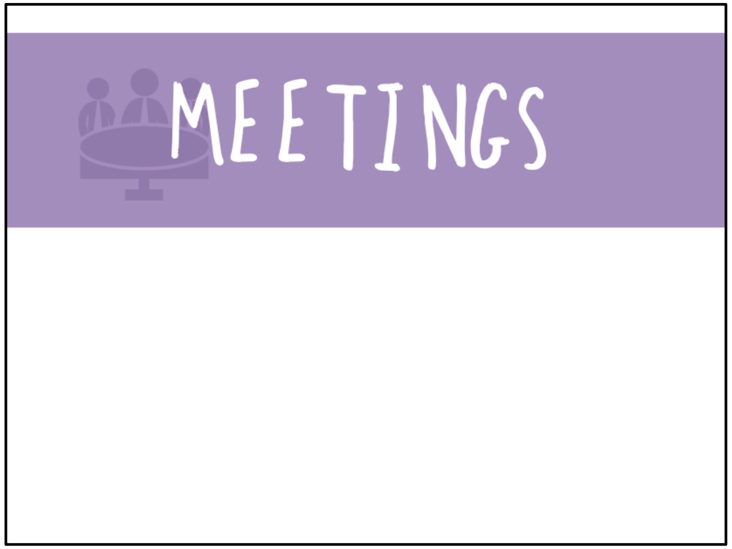


Meetings are our most important means of communicating. You can ensure that everyone gets the same message at the same time. You can check everyone's understanding of the information immediately. You can assess reactions. You can try to resolve any queries immediately. You can resolve problems or make decisions as a group. You can build team identity and team effort.

The first thing you'll need to do for any meeting is organise when you're going to meet. To avoid lots of unprofessional looking emails back and forth, it is recommended you use Doodle, a simple web based scheduling tool. Here's a quick demonstration to set up a basic meeting.

PREPARING FOR A MEETING

Now you've got your meeting organised you need to decide what needs preparing for it. Different types of meeting will require different preparations which you'll be able to figure out for yourselves, but here's two simple examples to get you started.

PREPARATION (CUSTOMER)

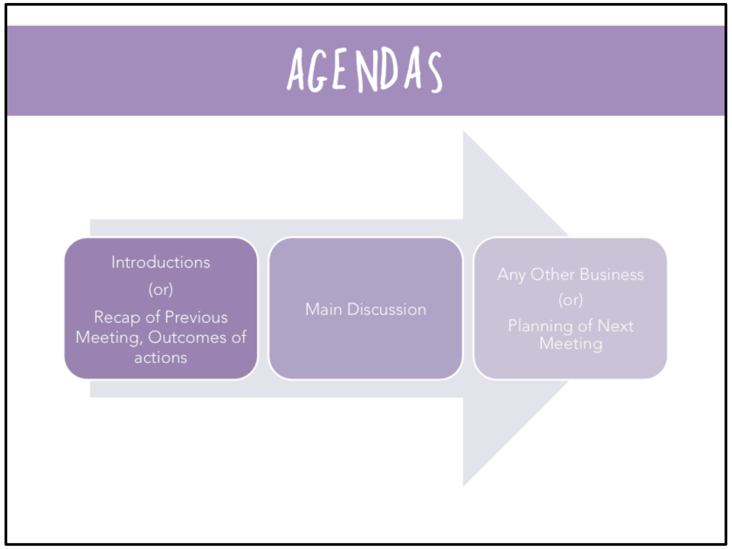
- Research
- Documents
  - Agenda
  - Brief
  - Questions
- What to wear?
- Who should go?

You're about to have your first meeting with your new customer. To start off with, who are they? Where do they work? What do they do? A little bit of research into your customer can give you some context about the problem that your customer wants you to solve. It shows that you have an interest in your project and may prompt questions you want to ask.

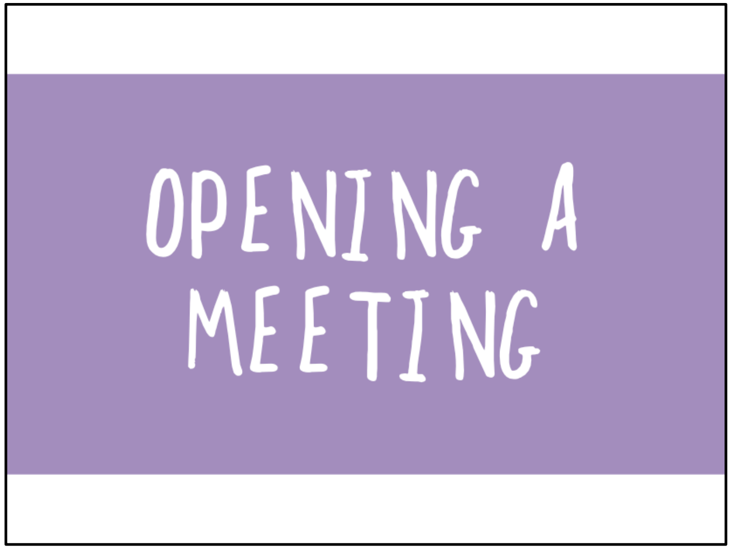
What documents are you going to need? Do you need to circulate them beforehand? As this is your first meeting and you should have seen a brief describing the basic premise of the project, what questions do you have for the customer?

First impressions count and from your initial research you might be able to tell whether you need a shirt and tie or if jeans and a t-shirt is acceptable. If in doubt, smart casual is usually a safe bet. Finally you need to decide who should go to a meeting. In the past whole teams have attended meetings, and whilst in a small team of 4 this isn't necessarily a problem, you should be aware that not everyone 'has' to go to a meeting.

We know that the agile manifesto states we prefer working code over comprehensive documentation, and that's the key here. Some documents pertaining to your project are necessary, particularly as we need to make sure that you have sufficient evidence to support your marks at the end of the year. Agendas serve as a plan for your meetings, something to keep you relatively on track. It's a good idea to send these around to those attending before the meeting in question, you could even as the doodle demonstration showed, include your agenda in the event invitation.



You shouldn't need to go into too much detail here, but you want a rough outline of your meeting. At the beginning where you're having your fist meeting with a customer you'll want to start with introductions. This sounds simple, but you would be surprised how many teams have forgotten this in the past. After your first meeting you'll use this section for a brief recap of the previous meeting, usually just highlighting any actions that should have been completed and the outcomes they've brought. Your middle section should focus on the points you need to discuss in that meeting, whether it's gathering requirements as in the beginning of a project, walking your customer through a section you've just developed for feedback or discussing designs. Make a list of the key questions you want answered. Finally you'll want to round off by opening the floor for any other points that people want to make if they have any and finish off by agreeing the next meeting time. Make sure as I've mentioned to pass your agenda round to all attendees of the meeting, and note, this applies to your supervisor meetings as well.



Opening a meeting is relatively straightforward. Though your initial meeting with a customer contains a step which is surprisingly often forgotten.

Introduce yourselves. Tell your customer who you are and what you're here to do. Exchange contact details as necessary. Your customers have only been told briefly the process of Genesys, it's up to you to foster a good working relationship with them, and it all stems from introductions.

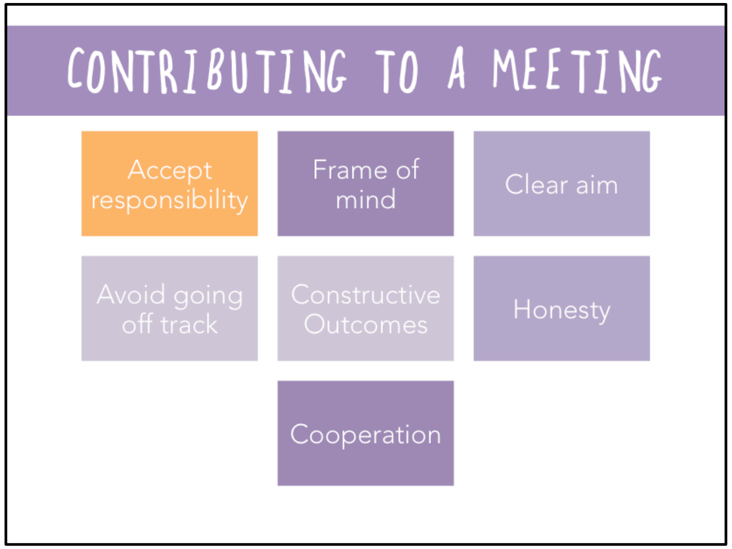
OPENING A MEETING

- Review the agenda

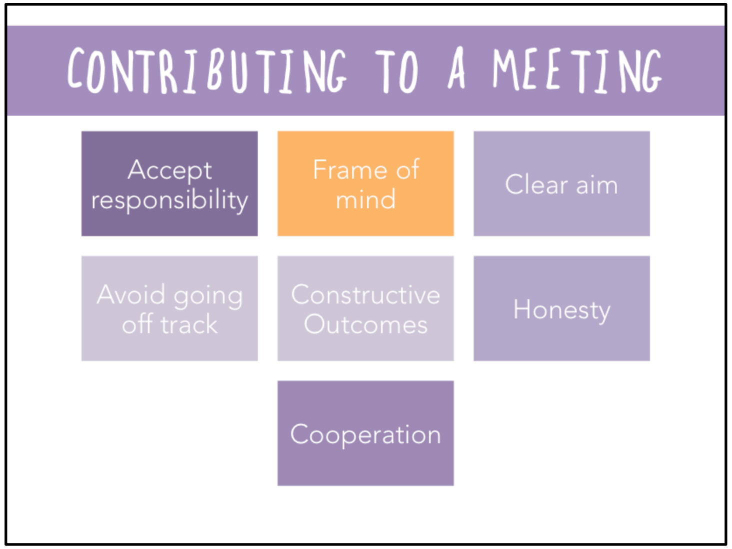
Once your introductions are made, or if it isn't your first meeting, you can then move onto reviewing the agenda, which will guide you through the remainder of your meeting.

CONTRIBUTING TO A MEETING

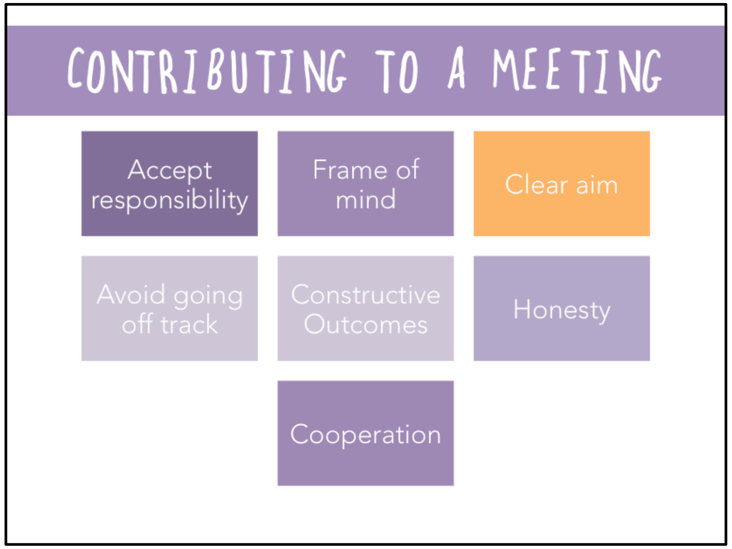
Whilst we aren't asking you all to have something to say in every meeting, it's important that you show us what you're capable of in a meeting situation. Here are a few tips for effective participation.



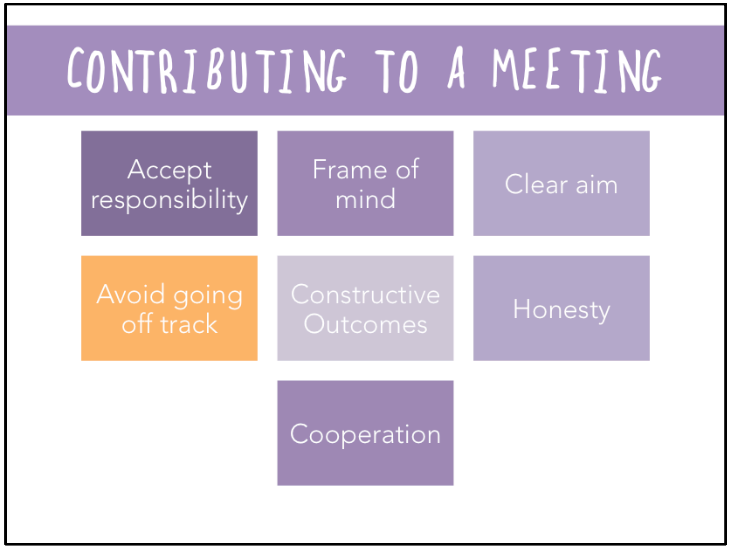
Firstly, you need to accept part of the responsibility for making a meeting work. Overly passive or overly aggressive balance in meetings doesn't lead to a productive discussion.



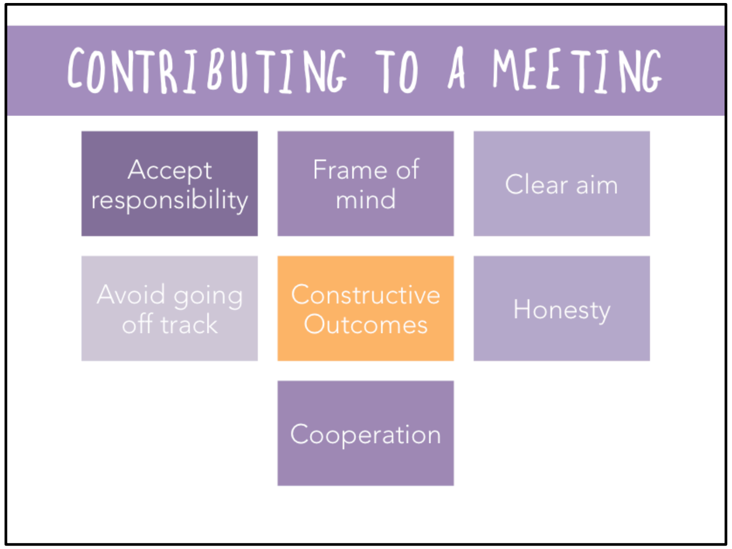
You should approach meetings in the right frame of mind. If you want to benefit, you have to want to contribute. As with many things in life, you only get out of a meeting what you're willing to put in.



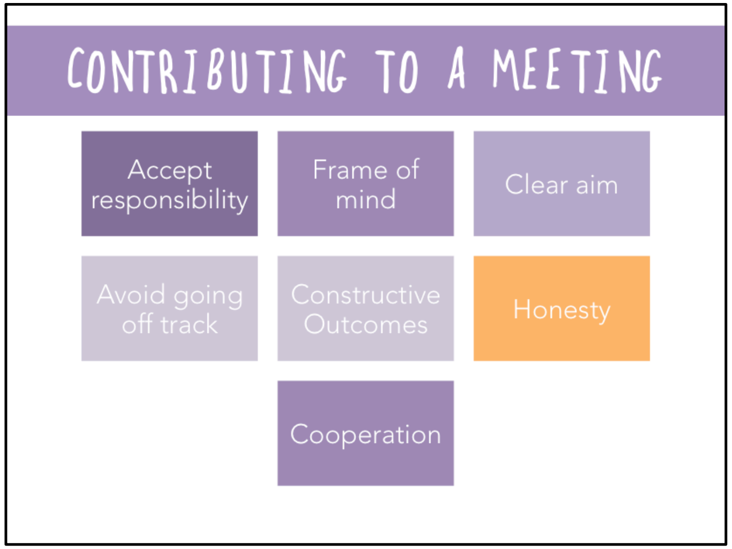
Meetings are only successful if everyone has a clear idea of the aim of the meeting. You should be able to gather this from the agenda if you have one, if not, you should make sure at the beginning of the meeting that everyone is certain of what you're there to discuss.



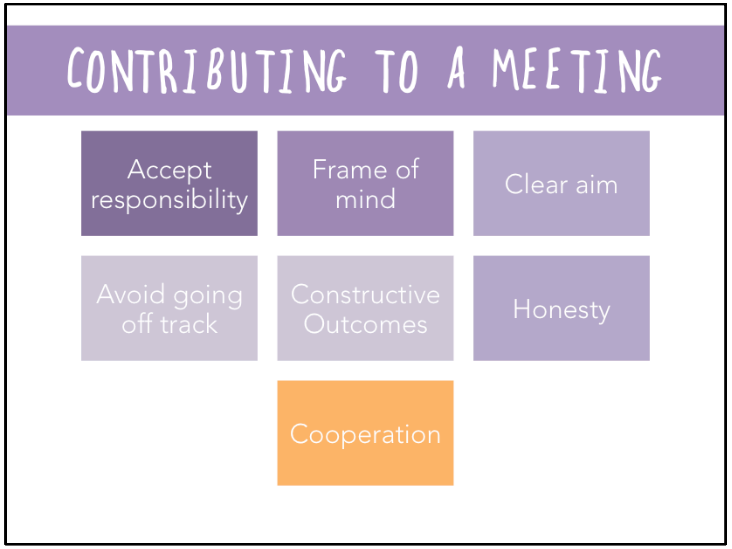
Similarly, you want to avoid trailing into different topics and getting off track. Keep the meeting's aim in mind throughout.



Seek constructive outcomes. It's very easy to sit and dwell on things that aren't working or have gone wrong. But in order to be productive, it's important to look forward. How can you fix or improve the situation



As mentioned in the video about working as a team, it's important to be honest with each other. As Patrick Lencioni's 5 dysfunctions of a team states, the foundation of any good working team is trust which leads into a team who is unafraid to state opinion and question each other. State your points honestly and don't try to guess what you think others want to hear.

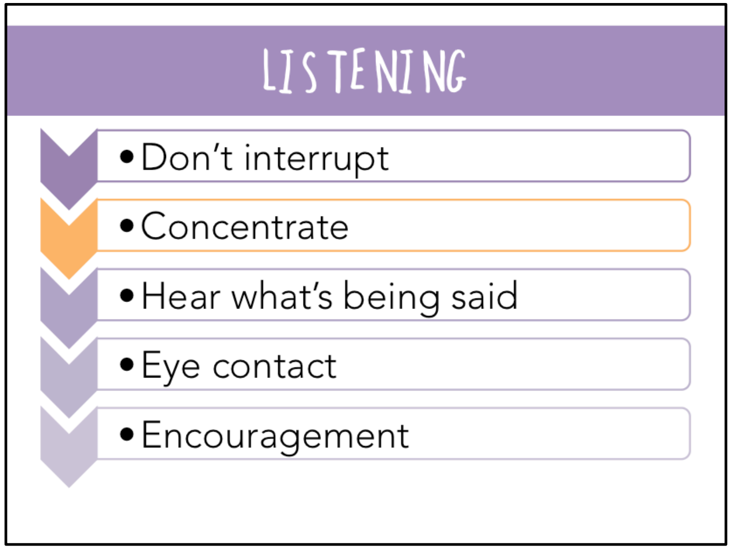


Above all, you're a team. Cooperate with others to build upon and explore new ideas, new practices. Try new things. Learn together.

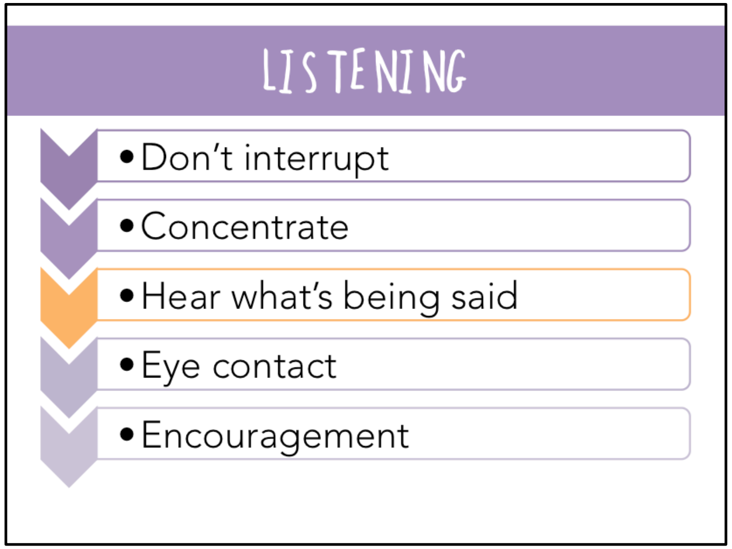
LISTENING

Meetings are primarily two-way conversations. You need to be able to state your own opinions confidently, but you'll also need to listen to other people's thoughts as well. Listening may seem like a common sense thing but here's 5 things you might want to bear in mind on the subject.

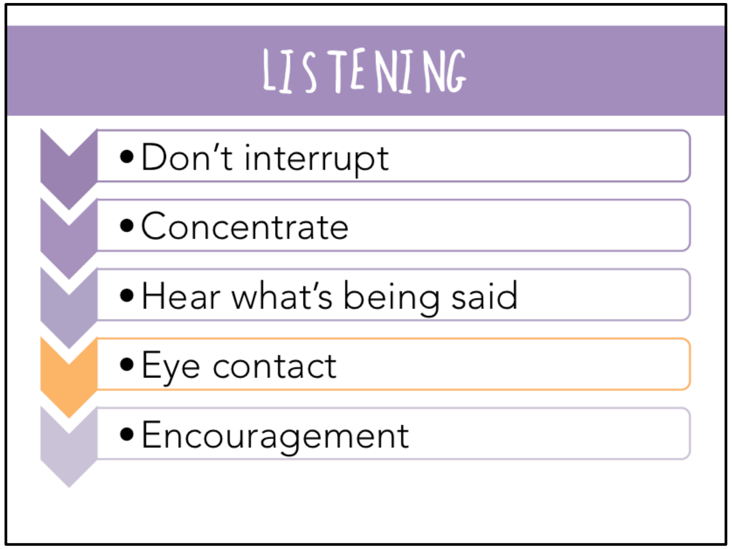
Be careful not to interrupt the person speaking. Not only is it rude, but it can put them off their point. If an important thought comes to mind, make a note of it and bring it up later.



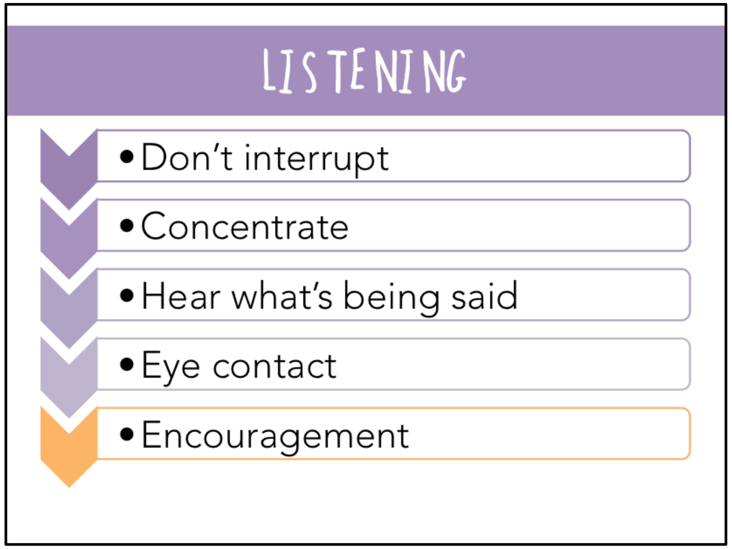
Concentrate on listening. Don't miss out on anything that's said. Avoid checking your phone in meetings, again it's quite rude but can also distract you from the point of the meeting.



Hear what's being said. If you're not paying your full attention you could just be hearing the things you want to hear. In customer meetings especially, often a customer can explain a feature they want in a particular way but what they actually want is something slightly different. You need to make sure you have the relevant information to interpret this correctly.

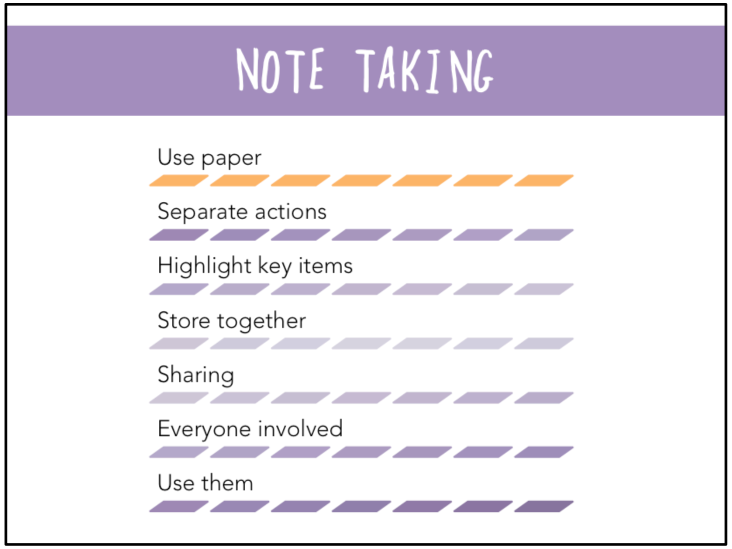


Make eye contact. It shows the speaker that you're interested in what they have to say. As a speaker, make sure in turn you make eye contact with the various members of your audience.

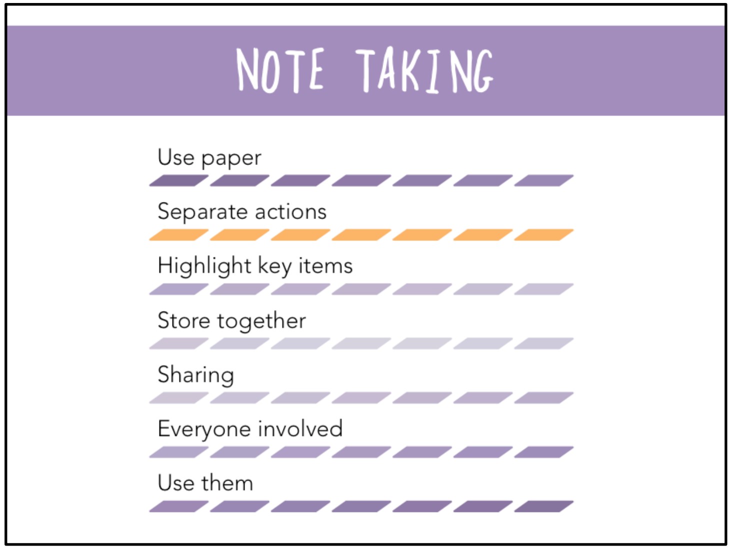


Don't be afraid to ask someone to continue if you feel you need further explanation or you want them to add to their point.

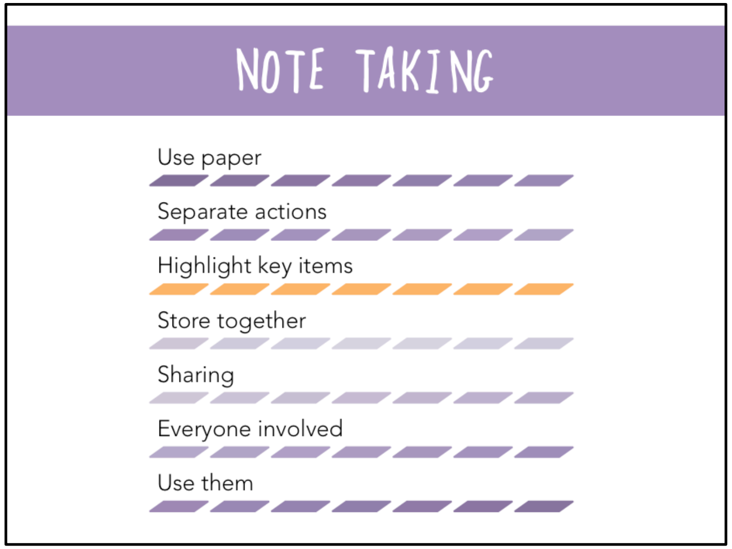
Almost as important as listening it note taking. Now we don't need transcripts of every meeting you have, but you will need to keep a note of any decisions, actions or other important information that gets discussed. Here are a few suggestions for keeping useful notes.



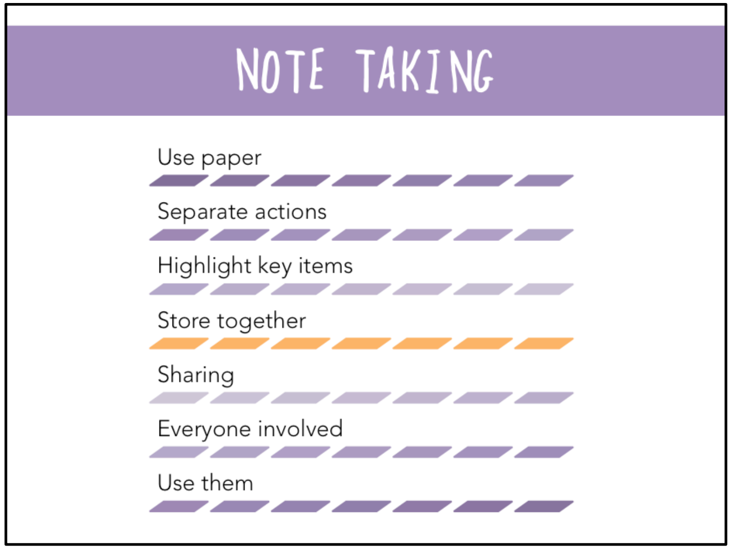
Go old school and use a pen and paper. Not only will it stop you being distracted by other things on your screen, it will allow you to focus on the people in your meeting, stopping you from becoming disconnected and missing important points. Using a pen and paper also mean you can easily add little drawings or diagrams that can illustrate the point or clarify it when you're looking at them later.



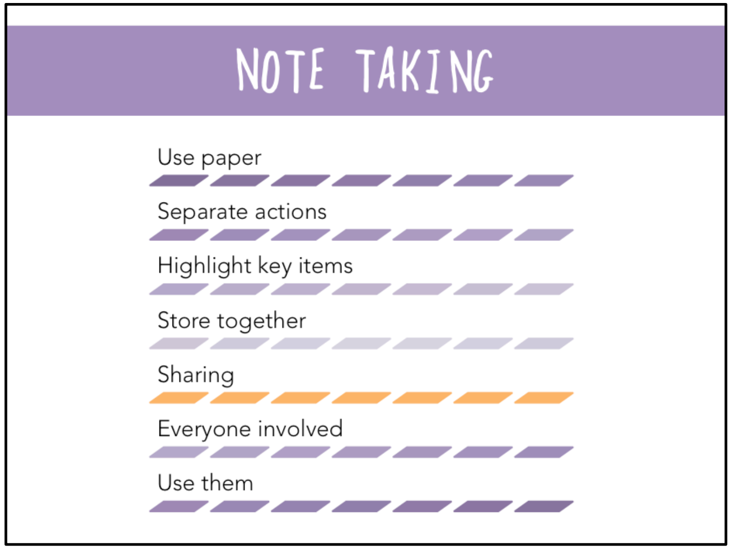
It can be useful to designate a specific part of your page for writing down your personal actions to they're easy for you to find.



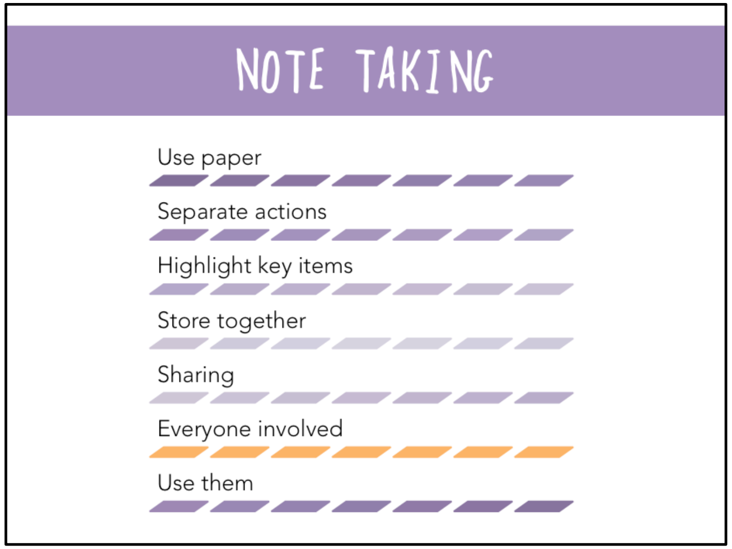
Or you could highlight all the major action points, decisions and important pieces of information so when you scan through your notes at a later date you can easily spot the key items.



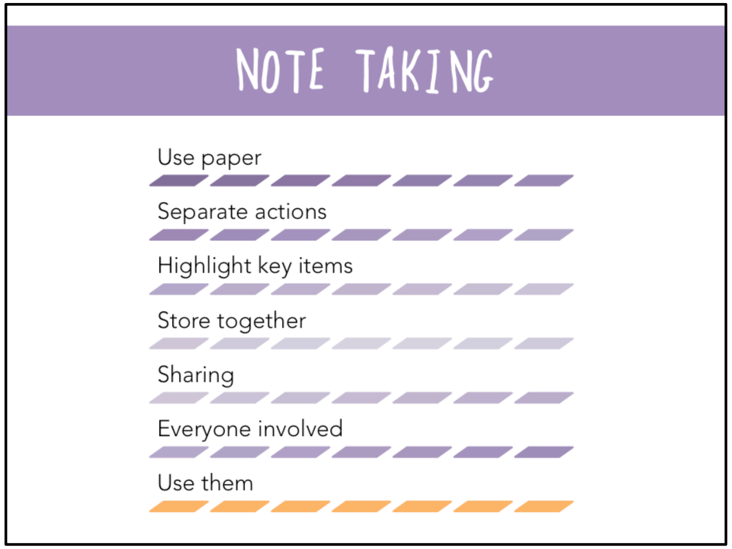
Use a single notebook or store all of your notes together so that you can look back to previous notes if you need to. It will also be useful to make a note of the date and a rough title detailing the purpose of your meeting at the top for ease of searching.



Once completed, take a photo of your notes on your smartphone if you have one. It means you'll always have a copy of your notes on the go and makes them easy to share with colleagues.

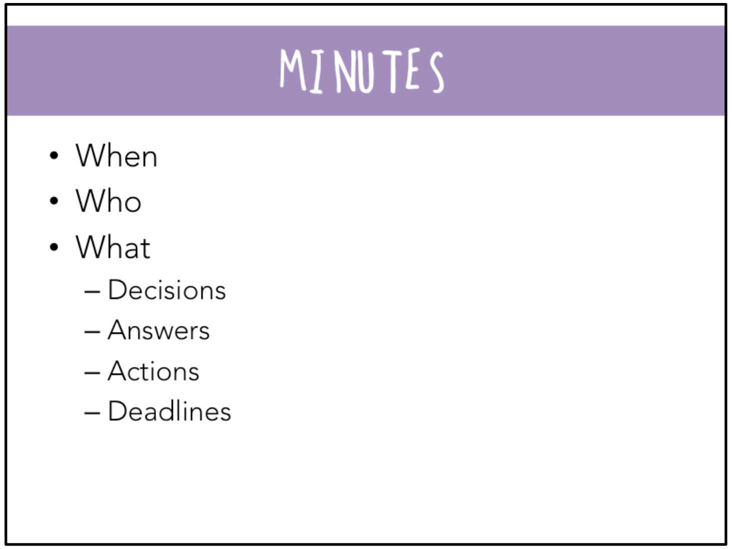


It's a good idea for everyone in your team to take notes. Everyone picks up on different things when we're listening to someone speak so it will be handy for you to capture as much as you can.

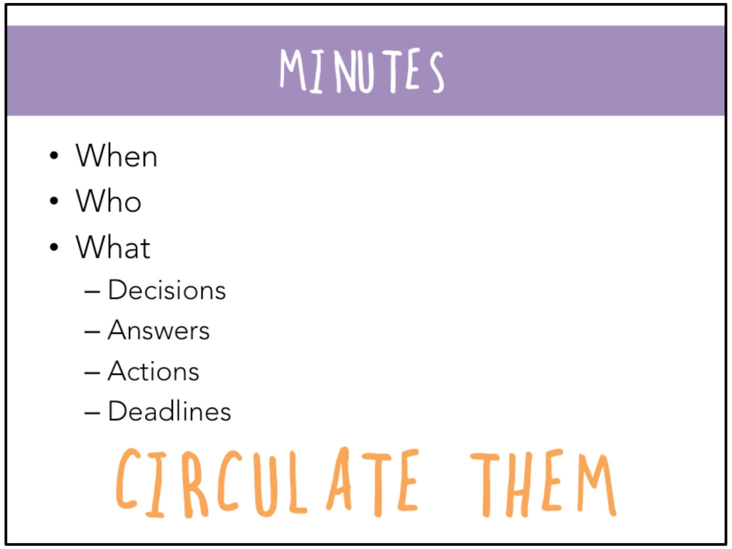


Use your collated notes to create your minutes which we'll talk about next.

As already mentioned, we prefer working software over comprehensive documentation, however it's important that you keep a note of some key pieces of information both for assessment purposes and so that you have a record you can refer back to of things that were agreed to.



You'll want to keep a note of when the meeting was and who attended. Then all you need is a list of any decisions that were made, answers to questions you asked, actions that need to be completed both on your team's side and that of your customer and the associated deadlines for each of those actions. Minutes should be written up after the meeting using your notes.



Then it's advisable to circulate them to everyone who was in the meeting, especially anyone who couldn't make it, to make sure that everyone agrees with what's been written and you all remain on the same page.

CLOSING A MEETING

In closing your meeting you should confirm the actions that need completing and write up your minutes, not forgetting to circulate them when you're done.

Check out some of the other documents included with this video for examples of what we've discussed here.