

Title:

10 Things That Lead to One Great Meeting

Word Count:

444

Summary:

Most leaders consider a person's ability to lead a meeting when making decisions about promotions. Here are ten tips will that will help you look like a leader by holding effective meetings.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Here are ten things that you can do to make your meetings more effective.

1) Avoid meetings. Test the importance of a meeting by asking, "What happens without it?" If your answer is, "Nothing," then don't call the meeting.

2) Prepare goals. These are the results you want to obtain by the end of the meeting. Write out your goals before the meetings. They should be so clear, complete, and specific that someone else could use them to lead your meeting. Also, make sure they can be achieved with available people, resources, and time. Specific goals help everyone make efficient progress toward relevant results.

3) Challenge each goal. Ask, "Is there another way to achieve this?" For example, if you want to distribute information, you may find it more efficient to phone, FAX, mail, E-mail, or visit. Realize that a meeting is a team activity. Save tasks that require a team effort for your meetings.

4) Prepare an agenda. Everyone knows an agenda leads to an effective meeting. Yet, many people "save time" by neglecting to prepare an agenda. A meeting without an agenda is like a journey without a map. It is guaranteed to take longer and produce fewer results. Note, without an agenda, you risk becoming someone else's helper (see tip #6 below).

5) Inform others. Send the agenda at least a day before the meeting. That helps others prepare to work with you in the meeting. Unprepared participants waste your time by preparing for the meeting during the meeting.

6) Assume control. If you find yourself in a meeting without an agenda walk out. If you must stay, prepare an agenda in the meeting. Collect a list of issues, identify the most important, and work on that. When you finish, if time remains, select the next most important issue. Note: you can use a meeting without an agenda to recruit help for your projects.

7) Focus on the issue. Avoid stories, jokes, and unrelated issues. Although entertaining, these waste time, distract focus, and mislead others. Save the fun for social occasions where it will be appreciated.

8) Be selective. Invite only those who can contribute to achieving your goals for the meeting. Crowds of observers and supporters bog down progress in a meeting.

9) Budget time. No one would spend \$1,000 on a ten-cent pencil, but they often spend 40 employee hours on trivia. Budget time in proportion to the value of the issue. For example, you could say, "I want a decision on this in 10 minutes. That means we'll evaluate it for the next 9 minutes, followed by a vote."

10) Use structured activities in your meetings. These process tools keep you in control while you ensure equitable participation and systematic progress toward results.