

The Problem with Meetings



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Why is it that everyone wants to meet...all the time? And when they do meet, they don't get a lot done? I asked a few friends and colleagues about having *good* meetings, and here is what they came up with - along with some of my thoughts! Make sure to send me your tips and strategies for effective meetings too!

Before the Meeting

- Provide an agenda, plan to stick to it, then stick to it.
- Determine the best time to meet (i.e., when your group is at its highest energy level).
- Send out the agenda to meeting attendees before the meeting with enough time for everyone to review it.
- Train for success: use professional development to stress the importance of effective meetings and set expectations. Don't assume people know this...obviously they don't.
- Consider this...do you need to meet? Can you meet electronically or one-on-one? Then do that.

During the Meeting

- Set time limits on talking (either explicit or implicit, managed by the chair).
- Take great (not just good) notes...and **SHARE** them (have the last person to the meeting be the designated note taker if they are not too late).
- Only topics that require discussion are a part of the meeting, leave the rest to items folks can read (i.e., announcements, non-timely updates, random info.)

- Hold all questions/comments until the last part of the meeting - make it the last item on the agenda unless absolutely necessary.
- Get to the point - your time is valuable and so is your teams.
- If you use parliamentary procedure...use parliamentary procedure consistently.
- Build in "ice-breakers" or team-builders. Everyone seems to hate them but everyone needs them. Expect adults to have an attention span of 7-10 minutes.
- Give people a role - it breaks up having to listen to you all the time and gives others ownership of the meeting.

After the Meeting

- Send out those great minutes - which will cut down on confusion and the "groundhog day" syndrome at the next meeting.
- Follow-up to make sure people are doing what they said they would do.
- Remember having good meetings is a process that requires work before, during, and after the meeting!