

Successful Meetings

Unsuccessful meetings can be a tremendous time-waster. The first question to ask should be why a meeting is being held in the first place. Is it to inform; to make a decision; to give direction? The purpose of the meeting must be clear before it's called. An effective administrator always states at the outset of a meeting the specific purpose of the meeting and what he hopes to achieve by having it. The meeting should challenge and stimulate everyone in the room. Keep the following in mind when planning your next meeting:

- A meeting defines the team, group, or unit.
- A group of people meeting together can often produce better ideas, plans, and decisions than a single individual or a number of individuals working alone.
- A meeting helps every individual understand both the collective aim of the group and the way in which each individual's work can contribute to the success of the group.
- A meeting encourages participants to commit to carrying out the decisions made and do their part in meeting the set objectives.
- For the leader, a meeting is a great place to show his leadership ability.
- A meeting can be a negative experience for those who come away with the realization that they are low man on the totem pole. Avoid conditions and statements that make others feel less than empowered.

Preparation for the meeting

When planning every meeting, you must ask yourself a couple of important questions: "What do I want to achieve with this meeting?" and "What would happen if I did not hold this meeting?" You must define your objective and determine the importance of conducting the meeting.

Every item on your agenda will fall into one of the following categories.

- **Clarification** – In many cases you could fax or e-mail a document that was clear and needed no further comment. However, if there were a need for clarification or comments or if it had great importance to the team, it would be proper to place it on the agenda, even if it would not require any discussion, conclusion, decision, or action.

- **Collaboration** – This category embraces all items that require a plan to be devised, such as a new policy, a new strategy, or a new procedure. You are asking for ideas and input from the team so that you can arrive at the best conclusion.
- **Delegation** – This is the time you assign duties and responsibilities to carry out your plan. At this point, it has been decided what the best course of action is and what the members are going to do.

Size of the meeting

Meetings typically fall into one of three size categories.

- **Assembly** – 100 or more people who are expected to do nothing but listen to the speaker.
- **Council** – 40 - 50 people who may be given an opportunity to comment, speak, or ask questions.
- **Team** – A small group of individuals who speak on relatively equal footing, under the guidance of a chairperson.

Agenda Format

Start Time: 10:00 a.m.

End Time: 12:00 noon

Item	Topic	Objective	Presenter	Time
1	Staffing	New hires	D. Helton	20 min.
2	New building	Fundraising	M. Chitwood	30 min.
3	Payroll	Benefits increase	F. King	45 min.

Creating an agenda is very important. Following are some guidelines:

- Do not be afraid of a long agenda if the chairperson can control the time. One to two hours should give you plenty of time to cover most anything without stretching the meeting out too long. Extremely long meetings tend to exhaust the participants, diminishing your results.
- Attach to the agenda a brief summary of each topic.
- Do not circulate the agenda too early; two or three days ahead of time is adequate.
- The early part of the meeting tends to be the best for the more difficult topics, as attention spans wear down and fatigue sets in as time goes on.
- Those topics that tend to unite should be in the beginning of the meeting, and those discussion points that tend to divide the group should be in the later part of the agenda. However, always find a unifying item to end the meeting with.
- Be careful not to dwell on trivial topics that must be discussed. Following the written time line can solve this problem.
- It is important to put the start time and the finish time on the agenda.
- If meetings have a tendency to be long, the chairman should arrange to start them one hour before lunch or one hour before the end of the workday. Generally, items that ought to be kept brief can be introduced ten minutes from a fixed end-point.
- If reports are handed out during the meeting by a presenter, they should be brief and to the point. If they are too long, the participants will not read them.
- Listing “Other Business,” “Open,” or any other undefined segment is a classic time-waster.

Meetings That Really Kick

7 OBJECTIVES TO PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

- List valid purposes for holding meetings.
- Describe the benefits, risks, and costs of business meetings.
- Determine the appropriate type and number of participants to include in a meeting.
- Use key principles and specific techniques to effectively lead and participate in meetings.
- Evaluate alternative meeting room set-ups.
- Complete detailed steps to prepare an effective agenda.
- Evaluate a group meeting against other methods of achieving a stated purpose.

When meetings are effective, they:

- Are a fast way to communicate among several people.
- Allow the exchange of opinions, ideas, and information for synergistic outcomes.
- Ensure the consistent delivery of information.
- Provide opportunities for participation and interaction.

Hidden Little Secrets

- Seventy percent of managers consider many of the meetings they attend a waste of time.
- Sixty-seven percent of managers report that they had to attend more meetings this year than the year before.
- As people rise to higher levels in the organization, the time they spend in meetings increases.
- Managers spend 100 percent more time in meetings now than they did ten years ago.
- Having to attend or lead too many meetings contributes to job stress.

COSTS OF MEETINGS

How much does it cost?

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Hourly Salary} \\ + \text{Benefits} \end{array} \quad \mathbf{X} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{\# of Meeting} \\ \text{Hrs. per Month} \end{array} \quad \mathbf{X} \quad 12 \text{ Months} \quad = \quad \text{Annual Cost} \\ \text{of Meetings}$$

Example: Assume that someone makes \$16 per hour and spends an average of 15 hours in meetings each month. (Benefits equal 25 percent of the salary.)

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$$\underline{\$} \quad \mathbf{X} \quad \underline{\text{hours}} \quad \mathbf{X} \quad \underline{12} \quad = \quad \underline{\$}$$

Example: Your own situation.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Hourly Salary} \\ + \text{Benefits} \end{array} \quad \mathbf{X} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{\# of Meeting} \\ \text{Hrs. per Month} \end{array} \quad \mathbf{X} \quad 12 \text{ Months} \quad = \quad \text{Annual Cost} \\ \text{of Meetings}$$

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Basic Structure of a Meeting:

- A clear opening
- An interactive discussion
- A summary of outcomes
- A clear closing

A meeting is effective when:

- A group meeting is the best way to achieve that purpose.
- There is a clear and valid purpose to meet.
- The right people are there.
- Everyone is prepared.
- Everyone participates.

VALID PURPOSES OF MEETINGS

To meet or not to meet?

Meetings are commonly held in order to:

- Exchange information.
- Coordinate projects and assignments.
- Make decisions.
- Solve problems.

Unfortunately, meetings are also held for other reasons:

- To postpone a decision that should be made by one individual.
- To solicit only positive feedback to an idea.
- To avoid other work.
- To flaunt authority.
- Because the meeting is regularly scheduled.

MEETINGS VERSUS OTHER METHODS

1. _____

2. What reaction do you expect from the people involved?

- Bad news
- Good news
- Neutral news

3. Do you really want or need input from the group?

THE RIGHT PARTICIPANTS

Who has “the right stuff”?

Consider the following:

- “Must-attend” and “should-attend”
- The right number of people
 - Delivering information
 - Soliciting participation
 - Addressing negative feelings
 - Making decisions
- Part-time participants
- “Un-invitations”

HANDLING PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

Problem Behavior	Technique
Latecomer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish the habit of starting your meetings on time, so that everyone expects that of you.• When the Latecomer arrives, quickly bring him or her up to speed on the current topic of discussion.• Don’t review the entire meeting; suggest that the Latecomer read notes from the meeting or see you after the meeting to learn what happened on prior agenda items.• If necessary, address the Latecomer’s behavior privately after the meeting.
Broken Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarize the previous conversations and decisions related to the issue.• Ask the Broken Record if he or she has anything new to add.• Remind the Broken Record of the need to stay focused on the topic at hand.• If the Broken Record is stuck on something that does not relate directly to the current discussion, write his or her concern on an issues chart and post it in the meeting room. The written note might help the Broken Record let go of the concern for the time being. Follow up on issues chart items at the end of the meeting (if time allows), outside of the meeting, or at the next meeting.

- Dominator**
 - Move toward the Dominator, then shift the focus elsewhere.
 - Say, “Thanks for your input. I’d also like to hear from the rest of the group.”
 - Call on other group members by name.
- Goof-Off**
 - Remind the Goof-Off of the purpose of the meeting.
 - Approach the Goof-Off at break and ask for cooperation.
 - Assign the Goof-Off a role.
- Critic**
 - Establish and enforce ground rules.
 - Ask the Critic for suggestions and input.
- Sidetracker**
 - Ask how the Sidetracker’s point relates to the topic at hand.
 - Use an issues chart; follow up on the issues chart items.
 - Use the agenda to bring the group’s focus back to the topic at hand.
- Invisible Person**
 - Ask questions of the Invisible Person (without putting him or her on the spot).
 - Ask the Invisible Person to be responsible for an agenda item.
 - Be patient.

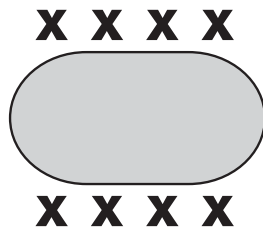
PREPARING AGENDAS AND ROOMS

To develop an effective agenda:

1. List the topics to be addressed during the meeting.
 - Your ideas and others’.
2. Estimate the time required for each topic.
 - Giving information requires less time.
 - Soliciting ideas, solving problems, making decisions, and dealing with resistance require more time.
3. Total the time estimates and make adjustments, if necessary.
4. Determine who will be responsible for each topic.
 - Involve others.
5. Determine the best sequence of topics.
 - Cover the quickest items first.
 - Cover items for part-time participants at the beginning.
 - Close with a unifying topic.
6. Document and distribute the agenda. Include the:
 - Name of the meeting.
 - Date, beginning and ending times, and location.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEETING ROOM SET-UP

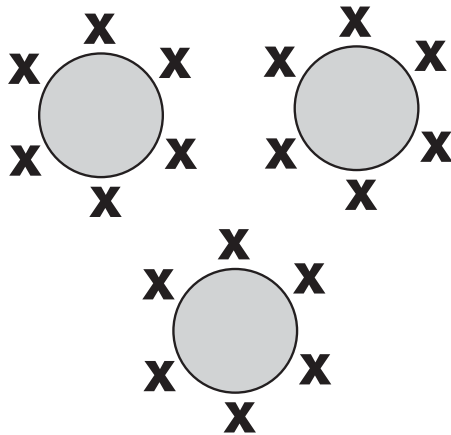
BOARD ROOM



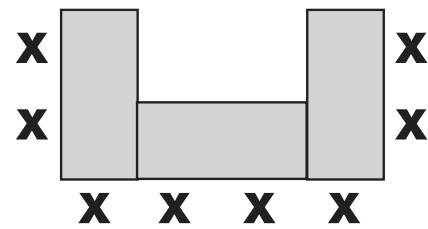
THEATER STYLE



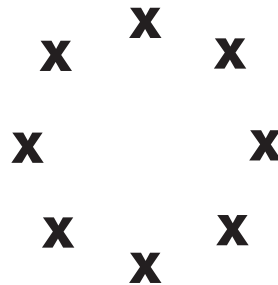
TABLE GROUP



U-SHAPE



CIRCLE



PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATION

Three basic principles of participation:

1. Stay focused on the meeting purpose and topics.
2. Respect others' time and contributions.

Duties of the chairperson

For the chairperson, having the right attitude is essential. There are three kinds of leader attitudes:

- **Pushy** – The chairperson sees himself/herself as licensed to dominate.
- **Lackluster** – He has no real motivation; he's just satisfied to meet and talk.
- **Wobbler** – This is the person who hopes to gain reassurance and support from the meeting to cover his own ineffectiveness and lack of decision-making skills.

The chairperson always feels a sense of power when chairing a meeting. The chairperson's self indulgence is the greatest single barrier to the success of the meeting. A definite signal that the chairperson has lost focus of the meeting's purpose is his continuous talking, hardly giving any time for discussion and contribution from the other participants. The chairperson should limit himself to a few sentences to guide the participants. As the chairperson, he is actually in a servant role instead of the perceived powerful role. The challenge of a meeting is to meet the objectives and get the desired results.

The chairperson plays two major roles in a meeting:

- **Team leader** – It is usually the role of the chairperson to help the group join in the discussion without being overbearing, stifling participation.
- **Task leader** – The task leader is the person who drives a particular topic to closure. Tasks can then be either distributed among the group or designated to one person.

The team leader and the task leader can be the same person, if needed, or the task leader may also be second in command.

The structure of discussions

The structure of the discussion is similar to the doctor/patient relationship.

“What seems to be the problem?”

There is usually something that needs attention, which is why most items are on the agenda to be discussed.

“How long has this been going on?”

An honest presentation of the facts and pertinent information is needed so that the situation can be addressed and a course of action decided on.

“Let’s run some tests and see what we can find out.”

A close examination is made to see what is causing the problem, and to make sure there is not a greater, underlying problem.

“Your blood pressure is elevated.”

When the facts are established, you can make a diagnosis and develop a solution.

“Reduce your stress and change your diet and that should take care of the problem.”

A simple remedy may or may not be the answer. The group should look at all of the options and then select the option that best solves the overall problem.

Conducting the meeting

The chairperson’s job can be divided into two tasks—to follow the agenda and manage the participants.

At the start of the discussion of any item, the chairperson should make it clear where they should be by the end of the allotted time and whether the participants should make a clear decision or just a recommendation. The chairperson should make sure that all the participants understand the issues and why they are discussing them. Give a brief overview if anyone is unclear about any of the issues. Be sure to cover the following:

- The reason for the item being on the agenda
- The status of the situation
- The present position
- What needs to be established, resolved or proposed
- Courses of action that have been explored
- Arguments on both sides of the issue

The chairperson then explains the meeting structure so that time will not be wasted. Sometimes the participants will need to review a draft document. If the document needs to be rewritten, that task should be delegated to a sub-committee to be brought back at the next meeting. At the end of the discussion, the chairperson should give a summary of what was discussed.

The human factor

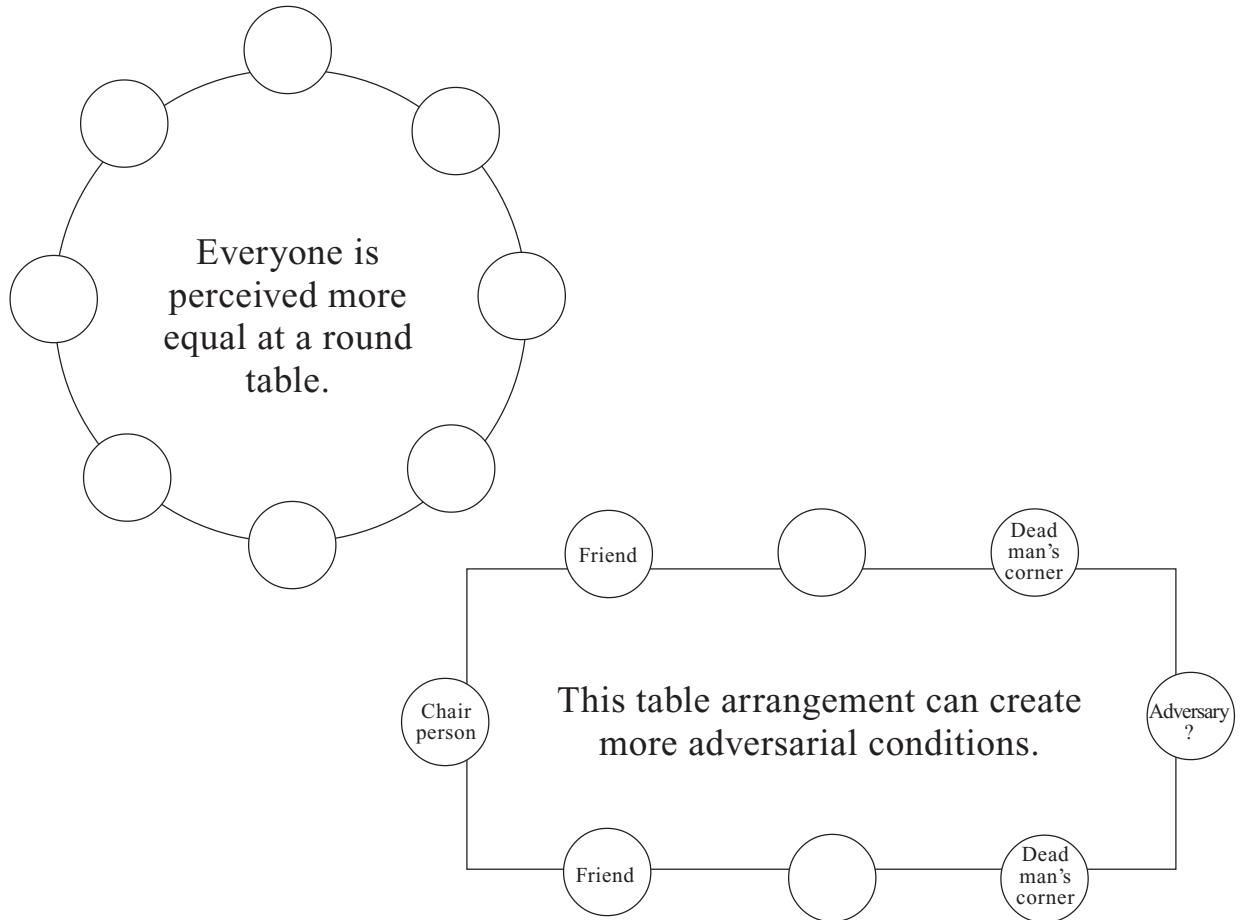
There is only one way to assure that a meeting starts on time, and that is to start on time, regardless of who's there and who's not there. Latecomers who find that the meeting has begun without them will eventually learn that they need to be on time.

Punctuality at future meetings can be effectively reinforced by the practice of listing late arrivals and early departures in the minutes. When the minutes are distributed, you are telling everyone who was late and who left early. No one likes being put in a negative light.

Certain realities should be considered when dealing with the placement of the people in a meeting. They include:

- Psychologically, it has been proven that sitting at a square table face to face generates more opposition and conflict. (see illustration)
- Sitting side by side at a round or oblong table diminishes the chances for confrontation. (see illustration)
- Whom the chairperson sits opposite from can also be a factor. The chairperson can exploit the friendship-value of the seats next to him.

- There is a “dead man’s corner” which is the end seat on both the right and the left of the chair-person if sitting in a straight line.
- Generally, proximity to the chairperson is a sign of honor and favor. Theoretically, the greater the distance, the lower the rank.



Controlling the talker

In every group, there will usually be at least one person who will try to monopolize the conversation; they love to hear themselves talk. The easiest way to stop them is to latch on to a word or thought and jump in. “Develop a program - that is a good idea, how should we do that?”

Encouraging the silent to speak

- **Fear** – Some people become very nervous and have difficulty speaking. It is the chairperson's job to encourage them to speak. There are many things that can cause fear. Some even fear airing a different opinion.
- **Anger** – This is not hostility to the ideas but either toward the chairperson, the meeting, or the decision-making process. Sometimes you will learn that this individual has something he needs to get off his chest. If it is relevant and appropriate to the topic, it is best to discuss it then.
- **Helping hand** – The junior members of a group can unknowingly provoke disagreement from the senior members. Senior members, whether consciously or unconsciously, resent the inexperience of the junior members and discount their input. The chairperson should be aware of this and reaffirm the value of the juniors' input. If the chairperson takes notes on their comments and refers to them later, he creates an atmosphere where all feel comfortable expressing their opinions.
- **Healthy conflict** – A debate over ideas is healthy, but a clash of personalities isn't. A good meeting includes both discussion and debate. The chairperson should guide and mediate all verbal exchanges as he allows the group to work through their ideas. If a heated exchange takes place, allow a neutral party to deal with the issue in a factual manner.
- **Squelch suppressers** – The elements of a meeting include:
 - o Questions – Seek information
 - o Answers – Supply information
 - o Response
 - information
 - opinion
 - suggestion

Suggestions contain the seeds of future success. If no one is allowed to make suggestions, meetings will become boring, sterile, and useless. The chairperson should respond courteously to suggestions and discourage those who would suppress suggestions.

- **Work your way up the seniority ladder** – Hearing from your junior members first will most likely give you a wider range of views and ideas. Often, once a senior person has spoken, others will usually follow along without expressing their views.
- **Close on a positive note** – If an issue remains unsolved at the end of the meeting, table the issue and add it to the agenda for the next meeting. Once you set a time for the next meeting, thank all those in attendance and close the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting

The following should be included in the minutes of your meetings:

- Date, time, and place the meeting was held
- Names of everyone present and who chaired the meeting
- Names of everyone absent who were scheduled to attend
- Names of latecomers
- Names of those leaving early
- All agenda items discussed and all decisions reached
- List each person responsible for action items
- Time the meeting ended
- Date and time of next meeting

Position Title: Church Administrator

Department:

Report to: Senior Pastor

Status: Exempt

General Summary: To serve the church by running the day-to-day operation of the facility, supervising all support staff members and volunteers, overseeing church finances, coordinating the scheduling, communication of programs, and assisting the Senior Pastor in strategic planning.

Essential Job Functions:

1. Coordinate the administrative functions of the church, including staffing, purchasing, budgeting, short- and long-term planning.
 - Printing
 - Telephone operators
 - Secretarial pool
 - Purchasing supplies and equipment
2. Supervise all support staff members.
3. Develop budgets for all departments.
4. Ensure that buildings and grounds are well maintained and repairs are completed on a timely basis.
5. Maintain inventory of equipment and supplies and ensure that office equipment is well maintained and serviced.
6. Coordinate and schedule the outside use of facilities.
7. Establish and maintain the master program and facilities calendar(s) and coordinate the total program of the church.
8. Serve as a resource person on appropriate committees and boards.
9. Research new business procedures, computer techniques, financial programs, and salary surveys.
10. Establish and maintain complete and up-to-date personnel files.

11. Coordinate the recruitment of volunteers, as necessary.
12. Work closely with the Pastor to plan and implement his vision for the church.
13. Attend staff meetings, retreats, and any other committee or board meetings necessary to carry out the administrative function of the church.

Knowledge Skills and Abilities:

- Leadership skills
- Time management skills
- Able to clearly delegate
- Strong computer management background
- Public speaker
- Mentoring skills
- Team developer

Educational Experience:

- Minimum 4-year degree in management
- Understand the church culture
- Some biblical training
- Management training

Note: The statements herein are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by employees assigned to this classification. They are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required of personnel so classified.

