

Important Structures For a Successful Meeting

Successful meetings use structure. Procedures and structure help groups perform significantly better in meetings. Meeting structures are the solid foundation upon which effective meetings are built. Below is a list of some of the important structures that make a successful meeting:

- *A regular time for the meeting is established, or meetings are scheduled for a period of time. For example, meetings for a given month, quarter, or year are scheduled at one time.*
- *The meeting leader is prepared.*
- *Desired outcomes are written.*
- *Important inputs to the meeting are prepared and brought to the meeting.*
- *Meeting recorder(s) is selected.*
- *The meeting format is developed.*
- *The meeting agenda is prepared and available ahead of time and is reviewed and modified as needed before the meeting begins.*
- *Planned participation is used within the first 15 minutes.*
- *Meeting minutes are recorded.*
- *The meeting is critiqued for continuous improvement.*

Meeting format elements. Successful meetings have a format. Knowing what will be happening in the meeting creates a sense of comfort. A format that is the same for every meeting allows the group to quickly take care of critical, mundane business, leaving the majority of the time to work on important agenda items.

Part 1: Meeting Startup

- Be sure meeting inputs are prepared and at the meeting
- Introduce any guests or new members to the group
- Verify that a quorum exists
- Review the group's goals and progress on the goals
- Agree on the meeting's desired outcomes
- Finalize the meeting agenda, including asking for any new agenda items
- Prioritize the agenda items with items requiring the most participation coming first; estimate times for each agenda item

Part 2: Meeting Body

- Proceed through the prioritized list of agenda items
- Summarize agreed upon action items and decisions as they are made
- Reports
- Announcements

Part 3: Meeting Wrap-up

- Summarize all action items and decisions
- Plan next meeting; desired outcomes, agenda items, and any meeting inputs
- Identify roles and responsibilities for next meeting; meeting leader, recorder, etc.
- Critique the meeting and overall teamwork

Part 4: Follow-up and Preparation for Next Meeting

- Prepare and distribute minutes of the meeting

Sample Meeting Plan. The following information is a complete example of a meeting plan that incorporates the points discussed above:

1. Determine Roles and Goals for the meeting

Roles:

Leader: *Jane*

Recorder: *Lisa*

Timekeeper: *John*

Desired Outcomes: problem statement

Information that is needed for the meeting: a brief summary

Who needs to come/How they will help reach goals: list of attendees

2. Create Meeting Outline and Assign Allotted Times

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|---|------------|
| A. Verify a quorum exists | 1 minute |
| B. Introduce guests | 1 minute |
| C. Review minutes and follow-up items from last meeting | 4 minutes |
| D. Address the problem statement | 25 minutes |
| E. Reports | 2 minutes |
| F. Draft next meetings agenda | 5 minutes |
| G. Summarize decisions and assignments | 1 minute |
| H. Critique the meeting | 4 minutes |

3. Prepare a Preliminary Agenda

Date of Meeting: Monday, February 3, 1997

Start Time: 10:30 am

Place of Meeting: Room 22

End Time: 11:15
Total Time: 43
Actual Time: