



Bringing Solutions to the Meeting

For those who are asked to attend a meeting one should recognize this meeting is going to take up the time of a minimum of two people and quite often several participants. So if someone has been asked to attend then they should come prepared, listen, take notes, contribute, and bring solutions to the meeting. If one does not fulfill these 5-requirements, then this person has wasted precious time sitting in on the session without truly participating.

Meetings are required without exception whenever two or more people or two or more companies work together. A meeting is a central point of communication even for those who have not been invited to the meeting because with every meeting there should be meeting minutes/notes to be distributed so that the entire team is in the communication loop.

Meetings are scheduled for a wide range of reasons, but the common denominator will be to discuss tasks and achieve solutions. That said, it is imperative that all attendees make the meeting an efficient use of the time involved because, as they say in the business world, "time is money." Analogous to an orchestra led by a conductor, a meeting must have a leader to facilitate the discussion. That doesn't mean the participants are not required to contribute. This conductor and the members of the orchestra all need to contribute by following the music sheet a.k.a., the meeting agenda, and by playing their musical instruments. However unlike an orchestra performing in front of an audience, there should not be an audience at a meeting. All participants should be prepared to participate. To begin the meeting there are three important tasks at hand:

- Meeting Rules
- Agenda
- Tasks/Solutions/Due Dates

Meeting protocol is simply rules to follow so as to be courteous, cost-conscious of everyone's time, and to avoid distractions. Every organization has their own unique culture in regards to meeting protocol. An example of this taken from "A Practitioner's Guide to Management in the Building Industry" are the following Meeting Rules:



Meeting Rules

- 1. Arrive on Time**
Don't penalize those who are on time and waiting!
- 2. Shut off Cell Phones**
Must be powered off and not in vibrate mode.
- 3. Computers**
Must be off unless everyone is using the computer for the meeting.
- 4. Video Conferencing**
No muting during meeting... be there when you are there!
- 5. Have a Copy of the Agenda**
This is the road map to conducting the meeting effectively!
- 6. Listen**
Don't interrupt. Wait to speak!
- 7. Contribute to the Discussion**
Get involved or don't attend!
- 8. No Side Conversations**
One conversation at a time!
- 9. Be Polite—Don't Raise Your Voice But Don't Mumble Either**
Show professional courtesy.
- 10. Accept Consensus of Opinions**
Support the team... no contrary comments outside!
- 11. Maintain Accurate Meeting Minutes**
Every meeting should result in tasks, assignments, and due dates.
- 12. Take Your Own Notes Too**
Enhance your assigned tasks and due date information.
- 13. Send Out Meeting Minutes within 24 Hours**
Project manager's 24-Hour Rule... no excuse!

