

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 5requirements, 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!

Focus on Facilities: Bringing Solutions to the Meeting (cont.)

Next is the "Agenda" and every meeting should have one and quite often this agenda should be sent out in advance of the meeting so that all participants will come better prepared to participate when attending the meeting.

Tasks/Solutions/Due Dates: Once the meeting has started and the rules are being followed there will be topics to discuss, based on the agenda, and from those topics will usually require tasks to be completed. With each "task" should be an assignment and here is where participants should volunteer to address specific task(s) and begin to a provide solution(s). Integral to providing "solutions" is to agree upon a completion date for the solution. Without a "due date" tasks may not come to a completion in a timely manner resulting in lost time between the start of the task and the completion of the task.

It is important to follow through and achieve closure on a task otherwise, those attending the meeting and subsequent meetings will have wasted their time following along while this specific volunteer failed to bring his or her solution to the meeting.

A time-sensitive means to keep all attendees involved is through meeting minutes produced by the "conductor", a.k.a. the meeting manager and distributed to all attendees and others who should be in the communication loop. An example of a standardized meeting minutes template is shown in this article.

Bringing solutions to meetings is to comply with the notes taken, the decisions agreed upon, assignment made, and due dates agreed by all participants. This note taking and distribution of meeting minutes in a timely manner is mandatory to follow through with this document. Important to note is that the meeting/ project manager does not want to give the other team members an opportunity to shirk their responsibilities by inviting blame for a task incomplete because the meeting minutes were not distributed in a timely manner. On occasion and very much unacceptable, that when a project manager has a meeting, he or she will set the time for the next meeting but then does not distribute the meeting minutes to the attendees until the following meeting. It is the project manager's responsibility to capture the spirit of the discussion and get the communication out to all attendees so that nothing is lost in translation, e.g., "Oh I'm just seeing these meeting minutes now and didn't realize I was supposes to have this completed by this meeting."

In summary, "Bringing Solutions to Meetings:

- Follow the meeting rules beginning with, "Arrive on Time"
- Be familiar with the agenda and the most current

meeting minutes

- Be prepared to contribute and volunteer where needed
- Take your own notes pertaining to the discussions knowing that there will still be overall meeting notes taken and distributed
- Listen and contribute to the conversations where needed
- Offer suggested leading to solutions
- Provide solutions in a timely manner

		Meeting Minutes				
Date: To: From: Topic: Project name:			Meeting date: Project Phase: Design Construction Cx Meeting no.: Project no.: Location:			
	Attendees		Copies To			
subr (This	nitted by	(Mee	eting Attendee) and (Meeting Notes Ta		ry are _ (Date).	
ltem No.		Item		Responsibility	Date Due	
Meetin	g Notes:					

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