



The Art of Effective Meetings

Skills Development Workbook

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Effective Meetings – Overview

Who is this workbook aimed at?

This workbook is aimed at those involved in conducting or chairing meetings. This workbook will equip you with the tools and knowledge to help develop your meetings into effective, useful events.

About this workbook

The workbook is intended to guide you through the process of conducting effective meetings in order to improve effectiveness and performance.

- This workbook can be used in association with other titles in this range.
- This workbook will increase your understanding of effective meetings and the associated skills needed to be effective.
- You are asked to read and complete the exercises in the book to embed your learning.

Who do you contact?

If you have any questions regarding this workbook please contact a member of the Focus Support Team by email at enquiries@focus-on-training.co.uk

How to use this workbook



The workbook provides a number of exercises for you to complete. These are highlighted by this symbol.

Effective Meetings – What's covered?

The workbook covers the following topics:

- Purpose of meetings
- Arranging a meeting
- Selecting attendees
- Chairing and participating at a meeting
- Evaluating success
- Minute taking

Learning Objectives

This workbook will enable you to:

- Use a structured approach to achieve effective results from meetings
- Avoid ineffective meetings by only conducting and attending those that are necessary
- Use techniques to manage dominant and reluctant attendees
- Energise and motivate meetings to ensure attendance and objectives are achieved

Effective Meetings – Introduction

Meetings are one of the most common forms of communication at work. They are also probably the most expensive. How many times do you say; "I have a meeting" or "I am in a meeting"? How many times have you been in a meeting and thought; "this is a waste of time" or "I shouldn't be here". These are common concerns of today's working culture. The art is to ensure that you only attend meetings that add value to your role and when you do arrange meetings they are relevant, with the right attendees, and effective.

It is imperative that all organisations have agreed structures in place to ensure effective use of time.

Peter Honey, the occupational psychologist, estimates that up to 60% of senior manager's time is spent in meetings. Yet a survey found that 72% of those same managers considered the meetings they attended a waste of time.

This workbook will help you make sense of your situation and the options available to you. It will help you to get the most out of your career and life.

NOTES

Why Have Meetings?



In groups or individually identify why you/we have meetings:

In answer to this question, your answers may look like this:

- To make decisions - to promote an action, to resolve disagreements, to respond to change, to decide between alternative courses of action.
- To bring key people together - when it is necessary to make decisions based upon the knowledge and skills of key people.
- To resolve a problem - when non-verbal communication is not effective, when it is necessary for face to face intervention.
- To inspire - when inspiration and motivation is required within a team or group.



Why do Meetings Fail?



This exercise can be done individually or in groups. Identify why meetings fail:

Your answers could have included:

- The wrong people are there
- Lack of control
- The meeting is unnecessary
- The objectives are either unclear or not in place
- Held for the wrong reason
- Poor timing
- Poor decision making
- Poor environment

The wrong people are there

The people present do not have the necessary authority to make the required decisions. The right people are absent and substitutes are sent at the last minute; they are ill-informed and unable to take responsibility.

Lack of control

The structure of the meeting is unclear; timekeeping is poor; the discussion rambles from point to point; hidden agendas hijack the proceedings; conflict is not properly managed.

The meeting is unnecessary

Information could have been transmitted on paper or electronically. The job could be done in some cheaper, simpler way. The problem only needed the attention of one or two experts.

The objectives are either unclear or not in place

Attendees have not been informed of its purpose; they have not received or read any supporting papers. There is no agenda or it is vague and unhelpful.

Held for the wrong reason

The meeting is held because it is a habit; a habit that nobody dares challenge. It is a chance to get away from the desk. They can often be called by managers to wield power over others, or to pursue some private agenda.

Poor timing

The meeting has been scheduled for the wrong time, day, week or month for a decision to be made. Attendees do not arrive on time; the meeting fails to start and end on time.

Poor decision making

The meeting breaks up without anything being achieved resulting in more meetings being scheduled. The group did not have adequate information to make a decision.

Poor environment

The venue is inappropriate or uncomfortable, facilities are poor and disruptions destroy concentration.