Meetings
How to Make Them More Efficient and Effective

Executive Consulting, Inc. Info@Colemire.com

Main Reasons for Meetings

- To inform
- To brainstorm
- To resolve problems
- To make decisions

Know Your Purpose

Create a one-sentence summary of your meeting's purpose:

- Use action-oriented verbs such as "decide, choose, plan."
- Avoid words such as "consider, inform, evaluate, assess."

Alternatives to Traditional Meetings

Consider these alternative methods of communicating, brainstorming, and decision-making to get things done.
- ✓ Technology/Social Media
- ✓ Huddles
- ✓ Office Hours
- ✓ Open House

Philosophy for 15-Minute Meetings

- Accomplish as much as possible outside of meetings—including brainstorming.
- Use meetings more so for decision-making than discussion.
- Use a data-driven approach to ensure decisions are based on merit.

Change Your Mindset

- Don't automatically accept every invitation.
  - Ask yourself, "Do I really need to be at this meeting?"
  - Ask for the agenda ahead of time and give input.
  - Send someone else from your group to attend in your place.
- Reduce the number of meetings you schedule yourself—consider sharing information another way, limiting the meeting duration, or allowing someone else to facilitate.

Unproductive Meeting Habits

- Failure to create or adhere to an agenda
- Being unprepared
- Waiting for others—or being late yourself
- Allowing attendees to talk for extended periods of time, repeat others, dominate the meeting, engage in distracting cell phone/tablet/laptop use, or demonstrate disrespectful language/behaviors
- Not assigning tasks and deadlines or following-up

Measures of Effectiveness

After meeting, consider whether:
- ✓ The meeting purpose was achieved
- ✓ You took the minimum amount of time to do it
- ✓ Attendees are satisfied with the process used to make decisions

Productive Meeting Habits

- Prepare and distribute an agenda ahead of time.
- Practice effective facilitation skills:
  - For every issue discussed, ask: What are the actionable steps? Who is responsible for each step? What is the deadline?
  - Ensure even participation from everyone.
  - Handle side issues without ignoring them.
  - Reserve chit chat for the beginning or end of the meeting.
  - Schedule smaller, shorter meetings.
  - Use real-time social network resources for those unable to attend.
  - Start meetings at an odd time.

Making Decisions

- ✓ Be a "satisficer"!
  - Identify the criteria necessary for a successful outcome.
  - Choose and implement the first option that meets the criteria.
- ✓ Create milestones that allow decisions to be modified due to changing circumstances.

Stand alone or as part of a Coaching Engagement.

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