Facilitating Effective Meetings

**Resources**

Culligan, R. (2016, April 29). Run meetings that are fair to introverts, women, and remote workers. *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/04/run-meetings-that-are-fair-to-introverts-women-and-remote-workers>

Gray, D., Brown, S. & Macanufo, J. (2010). *Gamestorming : A playbook for innovators, rulebreakers, and changemakers.* Cambridge: O’Reilly.

Kaye, G. (2013). Conducting effective meetings. In *Community toolbox.* Retrieved from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/main>

Kraybill, R. (2011). *Style matters: The Kraybill conflict style inventory*. Harrisonburg, VA: Riverhouse ePress.

Lent, R. M. (2015). *Leading great meetings: How to structure yours for success.* Stow, MA: Meeting for Results.

*Meeting for results* [website]. Retrieved from <http://www.meetingforresults.com/resources/>

This site includes a variety of useful resources including:

* Consensus guidelines
* Meeting culture survey
* Productive meeting evaluation
* Choices and tools for effective meeting structure

Schwarz, R. (2016, June 15). 8 ground rules for great meetings. *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2016/06/8-ground-rules-for-great-meetings>

Tropman, J. E. (1996). *Making meetings work: Achieving high quality group decisions.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Structuring an Agenda

**Categories of agenda items**

In *Making meetings work: Achieving high quality group decisions* (1996), J.E. Tropman devotes an entire chapter to “the rule of the agenda bell” (bell, as in bell curve). Tropman identifies 7 “categories” or types of agenda items, and makes recommendations about the order in which these should appear in an agenda in order to capitalize on the energy of meeting participants.

**Categories of agenda items**

**First 1/3 of the meeting**

1. Approval of the minutes
2. Announcements
3. Easy decision items

**Middle 1/3 of the meeting**

1. Moderately tough decision issues
2. Most difficult decision for today

**Final 1/3 of the meeting**

1. For discussion only items
2. Easiest item

**“Desired outcomes” and time allotted for agenda items**

When structuring an agenda, as meeting Chair / Facilitator, it’s important to consider and to communicate to participants what the “desired outcomes” are for decision items. By desired outcomes, do we mean that participants are expected to share feedback? Brainstorm ideas about how to solve a problem? Make a final decision or vote? It’s also advisable to provide an estimate of how long each agenda item might take – this will help guide meeting participants in their responses.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Agenda Item** | **Desired Outcome** |
| 10 min. | Annual publications update | Request feedback |
| 15 min. | Initiatives to support the strategic plan | Generate ideas |
| 5 min. | Library quiet zones pilot project | Vote about fall implementation |
| 3 min. | Update about the new power-saving screen savers | For information |

Activity #1 – Structuring an agenda

**Time**: 3 minutes

**Scenario:**

You and your partner have volunteered to co-chair a new committee: the library’s Environmental Sustainability Committee. You have put out a call for agenda items and have received a number of suggestions.

**Instructions:**

* Read through the list of proposed agenda items.
* Number each item, 1-6, to indicate the order in which each item should appear in an agenda.

**Hint:** See “Categories of agenda items” in your handout.

**Agenda Items:**

Brief presentation from a librarian from another library about how they collaborated with community partners to reduce waste in their library.

Should disposable cups be banned in the library?

How can we reduce the amount of water wasted in the library?

Quick update from our colleagues at the X Library / Branch about the installation of lights which turn   
 off automatically in the staff break area.

Request for a volunteer to take minutes at today’s meeting.

Quick update from the Y Library / Branch about double-sided printing.

Activity #2 - Managing challenging behaviours

**Time:** 3 minutes

* Find a new partner.
* Read through your scenario.
* Discuss some of the strategies you could use as a meeting facilitator to manage this challenge.

**Scenario:**

Uma Unengaged

Uma Unengaged is a very busy person, who often juggles multiple projects and responsibilities. During meetings, she is often engaged in side-conversations, checking her phone, making notes, etc. She seldom contributes to discussions. The meeting facilitator is not sure why she doesn’t want to participate, but her behaviour is distracting to other participants and her input would be helpful for group decision making.

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**Scenario:**

Ian Interrupter

Ian Interrupter is full of ideas and enthusiasm. At meetings, Ian Interrupter often interjects to add an opinion or correct a colleague when they are speaking. Some of his colleagues have complained to the Chair; some have stopped participating during meetings.Activity #1 – Structuring an agenda

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**Scenario:**

Norma Naysayer

When colleagues bring up ideas for new projects during meetings, Norma Naysayer is often negative, either using body language (sighs, rolls eyes, or frowns) or saying things like “that will never work” or “we’ve tried that before” when new ideas are presented. Although Norma has enough experience to have perspective on what might be more likely to work than not, some team members are frustrated and have stopped contributing ideas during meetings.