

Top 10 Meeting Effectiveness Tips and Techniques

By Nancy MacKay, PhD

1. Get everyone to be responsible and accountable for the success of your meetings. Request full participation from all participants. Foster an environment of open and honest communication. Acknowledge that everyone has a valid point of view that will be valued at meetings.
2. Start all meetings on time and end all meetings on time. When a person is late, make a request in private that he/she honour start times to ensure meeting effectiveness for future meetings.
3. Introduce the rule of one conversation at a time. If a side conversation occurs, stop speaking and create silence or ask the "offenders" to share their thoughts with the group.
4. Make the request of full participation at all meetings. If key people are missing, get agreement in advance that decisions will be made without their participation.
5. Use a "parking lot" on a white board or flip chart paper at every meeting for when people add points that are off topic. Acknowledge the point and suggest that the item will be added to the parking lot for a later discussion.
6. When people become emotional during a meeting, acknowledge the emotion and allow people to uncover the real issue that is causing the upset. Emotions are contagious. Use the "parking lot" if necessary to get the meeting back on track. Schedule a separate meeting to deal with the issue.
7. Make a request of no electronic devices during meetings. If necessary, in a private conversation, ask "offenders" to honour your request.
8. Minimize information sharing items on your meeting agenda. Ask participants to prepare for meetings in advance by reviewing all relevant materials.
9. Prepare an agenda for every meeting. Indicate whether the agenda item is for information sharing or for decision-making purposes. Identify a lead person for each agenda item. Allow more time for decision-making items.
10. Start every meeting and end every meeting with positivity. Acknowledge participants, celebrate success or share a positive moment to foster a positive attitude and ensure meeting success.

