
successful meetings

1. This guideline is for more 'informal' meetings (eg meetings at work to discuss the progress of a project, to resolve a problem or transfer information). This type of meeting still needs to be run in a similar way to a more formal meeting (eg requires a facilitator, an agenda and also minutes as a record of actions decided at the meeting) but it doesn't include director or treasurer reports or motions to be moved etc.
2. For details of more 'formal' meetings, generally where a legal obligation is a pre-requisite (eg company AGM, board meetings or club/organisation meetings where reports to members are given and passed, correspondence is formally dealt with etc) please refer to other educational material at www.shtm.org.au . However, remember, the following information also underlies the essentials to a good 'formal' meeting.
3. In summary the essential ingredients for a successful meeting are:
 - Good preparation; defined objectives; good agenda; focus; good minutes; good outcomes

BEFORE THE MEETING

4. Consider alternative to holding a meeting
 - Does the cost of the meeting justify the advantages of holding it?
 - Time is money - 10 attendees @ \$100 per hour = \$16 per minute
5. What type of meeting?
 - Stand and deliver
 - i. For a 10 minute "no-fluff" meeting – do not seat the attendees
 - Information – Giving
 - i. Leader does most of the talking
 - ii. Purpose is to provide clear and complete information
 - Information – Taking
 - i. Open, honest discussion essential
 - ii. Encourage discussion
 - iii. Ask open-ended questions
 - Problem Solving
 - i. Communication between group and leader
 - ii. Leader provides information
6. Prepare/distribute agenda (essential)
 - Acts as a "to do" list – defines meeting purpose and objectives
 - Circulate in advance – attendees need time to prepare
 - Don't hold meetings by ambush
7. Attendees
 - Commitment to attend meetings
 - Who is really necessary? – limit attendance (part-time participants?)
 - Anything for attendees to prepare or bring to the meeting (it may not be obvious to them)
 - Am I necessary?
 - i. Anything to gain from meeting?
 - ii. Anything to contribute to meeting or part of meeting?
8. Meeting time
 - Best times are 11:00am (before lunch) and 4:00pm (before quitting time)

AT THE MEETING

9. Attributes of a good meeting

- Start fast
 - i. Start precisely on time
 - ii. Establish a friendly atmosphere
 - iii. Start on time
 - iv. Welcome the group
 - v. Review agenda - stick to it
 - vi. Bring everyone up-to-date
- Minutes
 - i. Review minutes from previous meeting
 - ii. Take notes to create minutes
 1. important discussions, decisions and action items (who, what, when etc)
- Stay on track
 - i. Stick to the agenda
 - ii. Time is money
 - iii. Maintain fast pace – eliminates procrastination, contemplation & reflection
 - iv. Start participation
 1. state the need
 2. call on experience or expertise
 3. compliment input
 4. ask for help
 5. pick-up on previous information
 - v. No unscheduled speeches
 - vi. Focus on the group not on individuals
- Leadership
 - i. Initiating
 - ii. Orienting
 - iii. Clarifying
 - iv. Informing
 - v. Integrating
 - vi. Test possible solutions
 - vii. Encourage participation – no seat warmers
 - viii. Promote accountability
- Contribution
 - i. Spare the oxygen – don't dominate the conversation – quality better than quantity
 - ii. Ideas belong to the group not the individual
 - iii. Stay focused on the meeting purpose and objectives
- Listening
 - i. Listen actively
 - ii. Remain objective
 - iii. Listen for what is “not” said
 - iv. Listen for consensus
 - v. Be a complete listener
- Close decisively
 - i. Signal that concluding time is near
 - ii. Review problem briefly
 - iii. Summarise progress made
 - iv. Emphasise major agreements
 - v. Give instructions for actions
 - vi. End with consensus on
 1. what the issues are
 2. what to do, when and by whom
 - vii. Schedule next meeting
 - viii. Close with strong positive statement

AFTER THE MEETING

10. Distribute minutes – request corrections by certain date
11. Organise and conduct brainstorming sessions on related topics – the real work continues after the meeting
12. Cancel future meetings if deemed unnecessary

Meeting Checklist

- Meeting Date:
- Starting/finishing time:
- Location:
- Participants: (specify attendee's involvement if required)

- Meeting notice distributed:
- Room reserved:
- Seating arranged:
- Meeting materials: note pads, pencils, name badges, handouts
- Equipment: flip chart, marking pens, microphone, slide projector, spare bulb, lectern, overhead projector, projector table, video, computer, extension chord
- Minutes recorded by:
- Agenda prepared/distributed:
- Meeting objectives:
- Food and drinks:
- Review and results of meeting:
- Follow-up actions:

- Minutes distributed to participants & others:

AGENDA

Project:	Sydney Opera House	Date:	14/11/2003
Meeting Type/No.:	Design Group – Meeting No 002	Location:	Room 2
Reference:	Design Review Meeting No. 2	Reference No.:	MM10002

- 1) Review minutes of previous meeting – issues arising
 - 2) Design issues
 - a) Roof fastening method
 - b) Concrete pour rates
 - c) Blah
 - d) Blah
 - e) Blah
 - 3) Timetable
 - a) Getting slightly behind time
 - b) Christmas break – what effect on milestones?
 - c) Blah
 - d) blah
 - 4) Budget
 - a) Makes heaps of money
 - b) How are we managing to do this?
 - c) Blah
 - d) Blah
 - 5) Other issues – maximum 20 minutes allocated
 - 6) Next meeting
 - a) More regular meetings
 - b) After Christmas break
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MINUTES OF MEETING *(example only)*

<company address details here>

<company contact details here>

<company
name/logo
here>

PROJECT	Sydney Opera House			DATE	14/10/2003
MEETING TYPE/No	Design Group - Meeting No. 002	LOCATION	Meeting Room 2	CHAired BY	Joe Blow
REFERENCE	Design Review Meeting No.2	REF. No.	MM10002	MINUTES PREPARED BY	Joe Blow
ATTENDEES	Bill Clinton, John Howard, Elle McPherson				
DISTRIBUTION	Bill Clinton, John Howard, Elle McPherson, Gay Waterhouse, Elton John				
APOLOGIES	Dame Edna Everage, Johnny Walker				

ITEM	ISSUE RAISED	COMMENTS	ACTION BY	DUE DATE	STATUS
1	Previous Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items discussed Rethink Item 23 Blah, blah 			
2	Process Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah, blah 	BC	24/10/03	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah 	GW	14/11/03	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah 	JH	17/10/03	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah. 	Note 1	25/12/03	
3	Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah 	JH	17/10/03	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah 	EMcP	17/10/03	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blah. 	Note 1	25/12/03	