

What is a meeting?

A meeting is where people come together to resolve problems, answer questions, make decisions, network, and share knowledge.

What makes a meeting effective?

Effective meetings result from three simple steps:

1. Plan

- Define the purpose, target outcomes, and who needs to attend,
- Determine the best format to achieve the purpose. In some cases, a conference call or email exchange may be just as effective as a face-to-face meeting.
- What information is required in advance?

2. Implement

1. **Establish the roles of chair, facilitator and reporter** (See Table at right. Note. Sometimes roles are combined.)
2. **Follow this process**
 - a. Within the cultural norms, *be on time, start on time.*
 - b. Display and explain the agenda, the desired outcomes and the time available.
 - c. Remain focused on the agenda and outcomes during the meeting. If needed, remind participants of the agenda and desired outcomes to politely keep the meeting focused. Capture off-topic discussions in a "Parking lot" interesting but best served during a break or at another meeting.
 - d. Record decisions and assign responsibility for action items.

3. Conclude

- Review action items (who is responsible and the timeline), positive outcomes, and ask for any final (brief) comments.
- Thank participants for their time and contributions.
- If required, schedule a time and venue for the next meeting.
- If time and group size allows, permit a **very quick** comment by each participant.



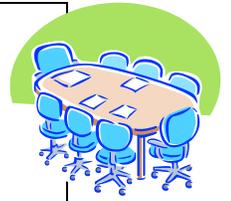
Simple meeting guidelines can make the difference between useful outcome and frustrated participants.

| Role | Responsibility |
|--------------------|---|
| Chair | The Chair is the group leader responsible for the content of the meeting – what will be discussed? The desired outcomes? |
| Facilitator | The Facilitator manages the meeting process – ensuring that discussion, dynamics and participation are productive and remain focused on the agenda. The facilitator ensures that people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect other's views • Debate points of view - not personalities • Speak one at a time • Keep comments brief and relevant • Participate Facilitators capture meeting discussion and make it clearly visible. At times, the chair might also facilitate. |
| Rapporteur | The Rapporteur is potentially the most important person in the group. They record and interpret group output, produce a written summary of the conclusions, actions, recommendations, and (may) report to the plenary sessions. |

Post the accompanying page titled, Meeting Guidelines, to help with your next meeting.

"When the outcome of a meeting is to have another meeting it has been a lousy meeting." Herbert Hoover

Meeting Guidelines



- Have an agenda
- Be on time, start on time, finish on time.
- State
the meeting objectives and the desired outputs.
- Identify the chair, facilitator and rapporteur.
- Set meeting norms.
 - Respect others views.
 - Speak one at a time.
 - Debate points of view—not the personalities involved.
 - Keep comments brief and relevant.
 - Encourage participation.
- Capture decisions made:
 - who is responsible for actions and when.