

The Meeting Template

Before all meetings:

- ✓ The meeting organizer articulates the objectives and desired outcomes of the meeting including if it's to share information, plan strategies or solve problems.
- ✓ The organizer challenges the need for even having a face-to-face session and considers the potential to use technology instead.
- ✓ The meeting organizer then identifies who needs to attend which portions of the meeting, and invites only those who are essential.
- ✓ If the organizer does not intend to facilitate the meeting or needs to play an active role in discussions, he or she appoints a meeting facilitator for the session.
- ✓ The meeting organizer creates and circulates an agenda that includes target times for each agenda item, all pre-reading or data collection to be completed. The meeting organizer creates detailed process notes so there is a process for all group discussions.

Before all meetings participants will:

- ✓ Read all relevant materials and gather required data.
- ✓ Give thought to the questions posed by the meeting organizer and come prepared with suggestions and alternatives to consider,
- ✓ Plan their schedule so they're sure to be on time.

At the start every meeting:

- ✓ The meeting organizer gives a quick review of the purpose and expected outcomes for the entire meeting.
- ✓ The meeting organizer reviews the posted meeting guidelines and asks if any additional rules are needed for that meeting. These guidelines are:

- ❖ *All meetings will start on time.*
- ❖ *Cell phones will be on silent.*
- ❖ *There will be one conversation at a time.*
- ❖ *People will listen attentively.*
- ❖ *Everyone will participate actively.*
- ❖ *Participation will be balanced with no one dominating.*
- ❖ *Anyone presenting will respect pre-set time limits.*
- ❖ *We will stay on topic and not re-open issues or jump ahead.*
- ❖ *All off topic items will be placed in the "Parking Lot" for future attention.*
- ❖ *Disruptions like side-chatting, texting, or walking in and out, will be avoided.*
- ❖ *If a facilitator is needed for an agenda item, the meeting organizer selects someone with the least involvement in that topic to play a neutral role.*
- ❖ *Before starting the discussion, the facilitator clarifies the purpose and expected outcomes, the process to be used and the time frames for that agenda item.*

The Meeting Template

During all meetings:

- ✓ All decision-making discussions are managed in a structured manner.
- ✓ Facilitators:
 - ❖ Stay out of the conversation so they can focus their attention on the process.
 - ❖ Make flip chart notes in a way that can easily be transcribed and circulated after the meeting.
 - ❖ Make notes that capture all relevant discussion content, not simply the final conclusions.
 - ❖ Keep track of the time and maintain a *Parking Lot* for off-topic items.
 - ❖ Ensure that the conversation stays on topic and doesn't stray.
 - ❖ Offer tools and techniques like *Forcefield Analysis*, *Fishbone Diagrams*, *Cause and Effect Analysis* and *Multi-voting*.
 - ❖ Call on people to make sure that everyone's opinion is heard.
 - ❖ Politely redirect ineffective behaviors by reminding people about the meeting guidelines
 - ❖ Help groups reach consensus and arrive at closure so that every meeting ends with tangible results.

At the end of all meetings:

- ✓ The facilitator closes the meeting 5 minutes before the designated end-time to review meeting intent and outcomes and ensure meeting finishes on schedule. This will allow people sufficient transit time to go to their next appointment and will enable access to the room for those waiting to set up for the next meeting.
- ✓ Each person will be given a last opportunity to raise a critical question or issue.
- ✓ The facilitator summarizes all conclusions and decisions. This will include a review of actions, a description of what completion looks like, responsibilities and due dates.
- ✓ The time and location of the next meeting will be set,
- ✓ Before they walk out the door, everyone will leave behind a brief facilitator evaluation card with their anonymously completed assessment of the meeting.
- ✓ The facilitator and meeting organizer will review the feedback and implement all suggestions that have potential to improve the effectiveness of future meetings.

After all meetings:

- ✓ The meeting organizer publishes a draft of the meeting notes with a timeframe for review and comment.
- ✓ Mid-way between meetings there will be a check done of the progress on action items with those accountable.