



# TIPS ON HOW TO RUN A MEETING

FROM "HOW TO RUN AN EFFECTIVE MEETING" AT  
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Productive, valuable, and engaging meetings require a clear goal, an open dialog, and a strong leader. This will ensure that each meeting runs smoothly and effectively - saving you and your team members' time and money!

1. **Make every meeting matter - or don't meet at all.** Decide if a meeting is needed and invite only the necessary people. Massive amounts of valuable time are wasted simply because managers think that face-time is important, or because they've become accustomed to a particular routine. E-mails are usually sufficient to give your team an update or a status report. But if you need instant feedback from all participants, then e-mail will not be as efficient as a face-to-face meeting.
2. **Define goals and distribute agenda in advance.** Create a structure for your meeting. Just stating the ideal result often inspires participants and makes meetings more productive. At the very least, it underscores a feature that every meeting needs: a goal. Before the meeting even begins, make sure everyone understands the objectives by writing an agenda.
3. **Own your meeting, take charge and keep your meeting moving forward.** Good meetings are products of good leadership. Take charge and make it clear that you intend to keep the discussion timely, useful, and relevant. Show your colleagues that you respect their time by making sure a clock or timer is visible to all. Staying on topic is also key to maintaining a schedule. If the conversation runs off the rails, refocus the group by saying something like: "Interesting, but I don't think we're advancing our goals here. If I could, I'd like to return to the agenda."
4. **Get the constructive input you need from everyone present.** Since the point of a meeting is two-way communication, it's crucial to get honest input from everyone. It's the meeting leader's responsibility to make sure everyone is heard. To build consensus or come to a group decision, avoid wearing your opinion on your sleeve; it's easy for a leader to stifle a discussion if everyone assumes the outcome is already determined. Avoid the temptation to dismiss ideas immediately — even when they're terrible.
5. **Close with an Action plan, try to make sure that everyone leaves knowing the next step.** Also end the meeting by asking everyone whether they thought the meeting was useful and, if not, what could be done better next time. Do a follow-up debriefing on your own to improve your meeting techniques.
6. **Keep track of progress of things decided during the meeting.** Also keep the group updated about the developments. This will help you in organizing the next meeting more effectively.
7. **Make sure that your meeting didn't happen in isolation by letting the right people know what was decided and what will happen next.** It's easy to walk out of a meeting room, go back to your desk, and immediately forget every change, decision, and new idea that your group came up with. Make sure you have a system to keep track of what was decided and what assignments everyone agreed to take on so you can follow up and keep things moving, even if you don't send out complete meeting minutes. Also, make sure to follow up on action items and distribute information to anyone who missed the meeting.