

MAKING MEETINGS MORE PRODUCTIVE

“Whether by phone or in person, we spend a good deal of time in meetings. Culling through several resources on time management and productivity and personal experience offers the following suggestions on making these meetings more productive.”

- ✓ **Don’t meet.** Consider whether or not you need to meet and make the most out of everyone’s time.
- ✓ **Consider stand-up meetings.** Have participants stand-up during the meeting in order to make it short, concise and to-the-point. These can be held in virtually any location.
- ✓ **Set clear outcomes for the meeting.** Consider the main points and the conclusion of the meeting and use these to build the meeting agenda.
- ✓ **Make detailed agendas.** A well-written agenda serves to make the meeting run more smoothly and can also serve as meeting minutes with little revision.
- ✓ **Code support information to correspond to that item on the agenda.** This helps individuals organize their materials.
- ✓ **Copy critical documents on colored paper.** This also serves an important organizational purpose.
- ✓ **Set time limits for discussion.** This tactic helps individuals focus their efforts.
- ✓ **Structure how new or controversial ideas are discussed.** It is a good idea to break up committees and make lists of the pros and cons of the matter at hand.
- ✓ **Avoid “committee of the whole” syndrome.** Use the committee system. Pass issues off the shoulders of the executive board to the shoulders of smaller committees. This is more efficient and it utilizes all members of the group.
- ✓ **Make sure to restate and summarize discussions, as well as action items and responsibilities which might have been delegated.** An effective leader will help the group “catch-up” by summarizing discussion and reviewing action taken.
- ✓ **Always offer “minutes in seconds.”** These minutes typically take form of a one-page summary of actions or votes taken, as well as key discussion format. This is key in keeping the focus gained during the meeting.
- ✓ **Take a periodic reading of your effectiveness.** Periodically, think about the following two areas: (1) the actual content of the meeting or “what” you met about, and (2) the format and flow of the meeting or “how” you met.

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