



Making the most of your company meetings

Are your board or company meetings as effective as you would like? Here are eleven tried and tested strategies for getting the most out of your meetings and your board or company members:

- 1- **Be prepared.**
Distribute materials a few days in advance so members have time to review them, but not enough time to put them aside.
- 2- **Be disciplined about time.**
Ensure that you start and finish according to schedule.
- 3- **Prepare and agenda.**
List the most important points first, and allot time to each – with some extra time for planned discussions.
- 4- **Prioritise items.**
Identify items that need action by the board, such as approving recommendations or developing a policy or proposal. Also identify items included just so those attending can be kept “in the loop”.
- 5- **Decide powers of authority.**
Make it clear how a meeting is to be run. The chair must be sufficiently strong to impose order, but does he or she have the power to guillotine or veto?.
- 6- **Encourage argument.**
Allow open debate, but encourage consensus decisions.
- 7- **Be democratic.**
Involve everyone by encouraging quieter members to present their views and not letting more ‘enthusiastic’ members dominate the discussion.

*performance
through
partnership*

- 8- **Tackle the important issues.**
Develop an annual calendar that includes important items that need to come up for regular discussion – development, budgets and so on.
- 9- **Use a flipchart.**
Make notes of important points to discuss and good ideas – and display them where everyone can see. This helps people to focus.
- 10- **Keep your meetings interesting.**
Add variety by inviting clients or suppliers to make a presentation, show a video of your proposed marketing programme or a tour of the website of one of your competitors that does something exceptionally well.
- 11- **Be comfortable.**
Provide refreshments and schedule a half time break.

Some of these strategies may sound obvious, but it is amazing how easy it is to lose sight of them. If a company meeting is to be effective, it is essential to encourage everyone to offer their opinions without allowing the discussion to disintegrate into a free-for-all; and to make sure that real results and strong decisions are achieved.

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