Leading Effective Meetings and Committees

Tips and Tricks

Shannon David Misialek PhD, AT, PES
Associate Dean Faculty Affairs: College of Health and Human Sciences

Meeting Plan

Phase	Practices	Key questions
Before	Purpose and preparation	Why are we meeting? What do participants need to know beforehand?
During	Participation and process	How will everyone have an opportunity to contribute? How will we keep the conversation focused and productive?
After	Decisions and follow-through	What needs to be decided, and by whom? Who will do what, and by when?

Before: prepare with purpose

Step	What it looks like	Ask yourself
1. Name the purpose	Decide, discuss, or inform. If it only informs, send an email instead.	What will be different at the end of this meeting because we brought these people together?
2. Send the agenda	Share it early with the question for each item, the time, and any materials to read.	What do I want to accomplish with each item?
3. Invite the right people	Include those who decide or are affected, and give others the summary.	Who needs to contribute to the discussion or decision?

Meeting types: Strategy

Meeting type	Questions	Key points
Brainstorm **Elevation: 25,000 - 30,000 ft.**	• Are we solving the right problems? • Are we living up to our potential? • Are we missing something? • Could we serve our clients better?	• Step back and look at the environment. • This meeting should stay in the Ideation stage and not get dragged into tactics.
Solutions Oriented **Elevation: 20,000 - 30,000 ft.**	• What is our strategic focus? • How can we tweak our strategy? • How can we refine our solution?	• We identified a problem and need to spend time tackling a strategic focus. • We need to invent a solution to address the issue and take time refining/tweaking it.

Meeting types: execution

Meeting type	Questions	Key points
Rally and Tactical **Elevation: 15,000 - 10,000 ft.**	• Are we moving the ball forward? • How are we doing against goals? • What do we need to get done so next week is better?	• We've identified our strategic focus, and we are inspiring and pushing people to execute.
Task Oriented **Elevation: 5,000 to ground.**	• What's everyone working on? • What will we get done today? • What can we check off the list?	• Briefly ask what everyone is working on.

Agenda

- Include the purpose of the meeting
- Send it early with important background information
- Within the Agenda:
    - Mark items that require participation like discussion or votes
    - Add time to spend on the topic/discussion

Example: Faculty Committee Meeting

Time	Agenda item	Focus
0–3 min	Purpose and desired outcomes	Confirm goals and identify decisions needed.
3–8 min	Action-item follow-up	Review progress and address barriers.
8–18 min	Primary discussion item	Focus on the key question and invite multiple perspectives.
18–25 min	Decision or recommendation	Clarify options, resolve outstanding questions, and determine next steps.
25–28 min	Action items	Assign owners and deadlines.
28–30 min	Closing check	Confirm decisions and ask what needs clarification.

During

1. Respect everyone’s time
2. Assign a note taker
3. Act as an unbiased facilitator
4. Keep discussion focused and on task
5. Include everyone
6. End with a recap

Common Pitfalls of Meetings

1. Discussion is going in circles
2. One person dominates the conversation
3. No one is talking
4. The group cannot agree

After

Follow-through	What it looks like
End with action items	Discuss what action items need to be accomplished and when
Send a summary	Share decisions and action items within a couple of days, while memory is fresh.
Close the loop	Open the next meeting with progress, and tell the community what changed.

Action items (example)

Action	Owner	Deadline
Draft mentorship program recommendations	Faculty Affairs	November 15
Gather feedback from department heads	Department representatives	November 22
Review recommendations and determine next steps	College leadership	December 5

Six Practices of Effective Meetings

☐	**Purpose**	Why are we meeting?
☐	**Preparation**	What do participants need to know beforehand?
☐	**Participation**	How will everyone have an opportunity to contribute?
☐	**Process**	How will we keep the conversation focused and productive?
☐	**Decisions**	What needs to be decided, and by whom?
☐	**Follow-through**	Who will do what, and by when?

Key Takeaways

1. Have a purpose
2. Plan the agenda
3. Share materials early
4. Make space for all voices
5. Redirect respectfully
6. Assign action items
7. Evaluate the value

Helpful Resources

1. Working Genius. workinggenius.com

2. Allen, J. A., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., & Rogelberg, S. G. (Eds.). (2015). *The Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science.* Cambridge University Press.

3. Rogelberg, S. G. (2019). *The Surprising Science of Meetings: How You Can Lead Your Team to Peak Performance.* Oxford University Press.