

MANAGING MEETINGS

Before the meeting

- Consider is a meeting really necessary or can it be managed by memo/email/conference call etc?
- Be clear about the type of meeting that you want e.g. formal/informal, to exchange information, to resolve problems, to make decisions or to generate ideas.
- Have an agenda and apply the 'two thirds' rule when deciding who should be present. Use active verbs and outcomes in your agenda.
- Circulate the agenda well before the meeting.
- Have displayed on the agenda the place, a start time and a finish time. Use the Pareto principle (the 80/20 rule) to decide the order of items on the agenda and the time that should be allocated to each item.
- Use reminder calls to check that everyone is attending. (Get someone else to make the calls!) You can also use this as an opportunity to set the frame for the meeting and to get the attendees to have thought about each item beforehand. Make it clear if you expect attendees to have done some work before the meeting.
- For long meetings schedule in energisers eg breaks etc.

At the meeting

- Start on time and build a reputation of valuing promptness.
- Make sure everyone is ready to start ('pace' your attendees).
- Summarise how you wish the meeting to proceed and restate the purpose of the meeting and the desired outcomes.
- Ensure everyone is engaged before moving on to the agenda. (Give them a clear 'why' for being there).
- Encourage contributions from all members while keeping an eye on time.
- Keep the meeting moving, keep the discussions on track and be prepared to defer non-agenda items that arise.
- Appoint someone else to keep the minutes. If possible record and issue the minutes instantly eg by using a laptop computer. Make minutes action oriented ie 'do X by DATE'.
- Frequently summarise what has been agreed and make sure that there is a name against action point.
- Coach your colleagues to impart only essential information if they have to brief the rest of the group. Use audio visuals only if absolutely necessary.

After the meeting

- At the close summarise the main points, check for agreement and book the date of the next meeting *if another is really necessary*.
- Agree a follow-up procedure. (This does not have to be another meeting).
- Conduct a quick debrief on how the meeting procedure could be approved if another meeting is required.
- Have brief one-to-one discussions with anyone who might have unnecessarily lengthened the time it took to have the meeting.
- Distribute minutes within 24 hours of the meeting.

Please let us know how you used these hints & tips and what others you would find useful

Email info@enthiostraining.co.uk