

“TEAM MANAGEMENT SKILL”

Lecture10.

**CONDUCT PROPERLY A MEETING AS PER MEETING
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES.**

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3.2: Conduct a meeting

The following is a list of suggestions on how to conduct the meeting:

A. Start the meetings on time: Do not wait for stragglers. Begin with the people who are there. If you wait for stragglers, the people who come on time will start coming late because they know the meeting will start late. Do not make people feel as if they are wasting their time.

B. Establish ground rules and guidelines: Take a moment to explain how the meeting will run, especially if a lot of new people are present. Make sure everyone knows that they can express their opinion when it is appropriate to do so.

C. Follow the agenda: Keep everyone focused on the agenda. If someone brings up an unrelated issue while discussing an item, refer that issue to the appropriate time on the agenda and continue the discussion on the current topic.

D. Monitor time: Keep track of the time spent on an item. Depending on what is being discussed and if it is taking a lot of time to work through, it can either be moved to a vote at the meeting so a decision is reached immediately, or you might want to empower someone or a few people to discuss the issue in more detail and come back with a report that will be reviewed at the next meeting. Do not let discussion drag on endlessly. This is a delicate balancing act. You want people to discuss issues, but you do not want one issue to take up the whole meeting. Finding the right length of time for discussion will vary based on topic, need, and other factors. You will learn in time when it is appropriate to allow discussion to continue and when to push for the discussion to be ended.

E. Ensure participation: Try to hear everyone's input. Encourage people who are quiet to give their opinions and ideas. Do not let the meeting be dominated by one or two people.

F. Secretary's role: Your secretary should be taking minutes. If there is a question about what has transpired at the meeting, the secretary can look back and respond to any questions. The secretary will also help the president keep track of all the information produced at the meeting. Ideas and people's commitments should be recorded.

G. Assign task when needed: When people take on a responsibility check to see that they understand what they are supposed to do. The secretary should write down who took on what

projects. After the meeting, you will want to follow up with those individuals to ensure that they are moving forward on their commitments.

H. Summarize key decisions and actions: At the end of the meeting, you should review what has transpired. You will review who has taken on new tasks and what decisions have been made. This helps to make sure that everyone understands what happened at the meeting

3.2.1. Key terms

1) Agenda

An agenda is a list of how things will be processed during a meeting, or a plan. This list includes topics and problems or issues that will be discussed during a meeting. It is an outline of what the meeting is going to cover, and it helps in preparation by stay focused on the wright points to be discussed.

2) Minutes

Meeting minutes are the notes that capture what happened at a meeting! Different than a meeting agenda, it records the decisions made and actions requested by the group. It's important in meeting minutes to capture information such as:

- decisions made
- next steps
- action items and who is responsible

Minutes are the record of who was there and what happened. They are an important source of information for people who were unable to attend or looking back to reflect on what happened. They're also an incredibly effective tool to notify or remind people of tasks assigned to them or timelines to keep everyone on track.

3) Conducting a meeting

A meeting has to be conducted. It means that the participants in a meeting have to be guided or directed in such a way that they can hold the discussions peacefully, each getting the opportunity to express his opinion, and decisions are arrived at democratically through free voting and at the same time all the formalities are being observed so that the meeting becomes valid.

3.2.2. Agenda

1) types of agenda

- **informal and formal**

An informal agenda basically refers to an informal list of items that will be discussed during a meeting and is often thrown together at the last minute. A formal agenda follows more of a format. This format includes the type of meeting, lists the meeting facilitator and lists all of the attendees. The agenda then follows a specific order: call to order, roll call, minutes from last meeting, open issues, new business and adjournment

- **prioritized and timed**

Prioritized agendas follow a priority system. Items are given an order according to perceived importance to the group. The topics are then discussed in this order. Timed agendas refer to using a set timeline for the meeting, usually a timekeeper is assigned to help stay on task. In this format, the agenda would be set up in time intervals. For example, 9:30-9:35: socializing/warm-up, 9:35-9:40: review purpose and desired outcome, 9:40-9:50: review minutes from last meeting.

- **Bottom line**

Don't hesitate to ask for input from other participants when building an agenda. Participants can provide valuable insights about which topics or issues need to be discussed. Having the appropriate participants is key to a well-planned and successful meeting. All agendas should contain the purpose of the session; have clear desired outcomes; classify agenda topics as either information sharing or information processing; and end with a topic wrap-up and a discussion of next steps

- **Agenda template**

Get a template according to your meeting

- **AOB**

AOB is a heading on an agenda to show that any topics not listed separately can be discussed at this point, usually the end. AOB is an abbreviation for 'any other business'.

3.2.3. Minutes

3.2.3.1. Types of minutes

1) Action minutes

It records the decisions reached and the actions to be taken, though not recording the discussion that went into making the decisions. This is the most common form of minutes used. They include a report of actions taken since the last meeting as well as planned actions. It is important to note who is responsible for upcoming actions. The secretary should save any handouts included with a presentation.

2) Discussion minutes

They are lengthy and may include information which is not essential to the focus of the meeting. It may be necessary to keep discussion minutes in a situation where the process behind the decisions may be in question later. Discussion minutes contain everything action minutes do as well as the discussion which lead to the actions decided upon. Do not include discussion which does not pertain to the topic at hand. Be sure to record the speaker and the focus of the presentation as it concerns the topic.

3) Verbatim minutes

Like transcripts, are a record of every single word said at a meeting. They are often long and can be difficult to skim for a particular piece of information. With the exception of courtroom proceedings and Congress, a verbatim record of a meeting is rarely necessary. Verbatim minutes will not always follow the agenda

3.2.3.2. Basic minutes outline

Here are some of the details that you should put into the meeting minutes.

- ✓ Date and time of meeting
- ✓ Names of the participants
- ✓ Agenda items and topics discussed
- ✓ Action items

3.2.4. Conducting a meeting

3.2.4.1. Process of conducting effective meetings

1) Selecting participants

- The decision about who is to attend depends on what you want to accomplish in the meeting. This may seem too obvious to state, but it's surprising how many meetings occur without the right people there.
- Don't depend on your own judgment about who should come. Ask several other people for their opinion as well.
- If possible, call each person to tell them about the meeting, its overall purpose and why their attendance is important.
- Follow-up your call with a meeting notice, including the purpose of the meeting, where it will be held and when, the list of participants and whom to contact if they have questions.
- Send out a copy of the proposed agenda along with the meeting notice.

2) Developing agendas

- Develop the agenda together with key participants in the meeting. Think of what overall outcome you want from the meeting and what activities need to occur to reach that outcome. The agenda should be organized so that these activities are conducted during the meeting. In the agenda, state the overall outcome that you want from the meeting
- Design the agenda so that participants get involved early by having something for them to do right away and so they come on time.
- Next to each major topic, include the type of action needed, the type of output expected (decision, vote, action assigned to someone), and time estimates for addressing each topic
- Ask participants if they'll commit to the agenda.
- Keep the agenda posted at all times.

4) Opening the meeting

- Always start on time; this respects those who showed up on time and reminds late-comers that the scheduling is serious.
- Welcome attendees and thank them for their time.
- Review the agenda at the beginning of each meeting, giving participants a chance to understand all proposed major topics, change them and accept them.

- Note that a meeting recorder if used will take minutes and provide them back to each participant shortly after the meeting.
- Model the kind of energy and participant needed by meeting participants.
- Clarify your role(s) in the meeting.

5) Establishing ground rules

- You don't need to develop new ground rules each time you have a meeting, surely. However, it pays to have a few basic ground rules that can be used for most of your meetings. These ground rules cultivate the basic ingredients needed for a successful meeting.
- Four powerful ground rules are: participate, get focus, maintain momentum and reach closure. (You may want a ground rule about confidentiality.)
- List your primary ground rules on the agenda.
- If you have new attendees who are not used to your meetings, you might review each ground rule

6) Time management in meetings

- One of the most difficult facilitation tasks is time management, time seems to run out before tasks are completed. Therefore, the biggest challenge is keeping momentum to keep the process moving.
- You might ask attendees to help you keep track of the time.
- If the planned time on the agenda is getting out of hand, present it to the group and ask for their input as to a resolution. (Also see Time Management.)

7) Evaluating the meeting process

- It's amazing how often people will complain about a meeting being a complete waste of time, but they only say so after the meeting. Get their feedback during the meeting when you can improve the meeting process right away. Evaluating a meeting only at the end of the meeting is usually too late to do anything about participants' feedback.
- Every couple of hours, conduct 5-10 minutes "satisfaction checks".
- In a round-table approach, quickly have each participant indicate how they think the meeting is going

8) Evaluating the overall meeting

- Leave 5-10 minutes at the end of the meeting to evaluate the meeting; don't skip this portion of the meeting.
- Have each member rank the meeting from 1-5, with 5 as the highest, and have each member explain their ranking
- Have the chief executive rank the meeting last.

9) Closing the meeting

- Always end meetings on time and attempt to end on a positive note.
- At the end of a meeting, review actions and assignments, and set the time for the next meeting and ask each person if they can make it or not (to get their commitment)
- Clarify that meeting minutes and/or actions will be reported back to
- members in at most a week (this helps to keep momentum going).

3.2.4.2. Tips for conducting effective meeting

- Start meeting on time

Start the meeting promptly on schedule and do not wait for others to arrive. A large amount of professional time is wasted by leaders who wait for more people to arrive before starting a meeting. It may require a change in the culture, but once people know that you start your meetings on time, they will arrive on time.

Tip: Some groups even schedule 15 minutes of time to socialize before the start of the meeting

- Ensure quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of members of an assembly or society that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceeding of that meeting valid.

A quorum is the number of members entitled to vote who must be present in order that business can be legally transacted. The quorum is usually the majority of the members unless a different quorum is decided upon.

If a quorum is not present, any business transacted is null and void except for procedures such as calling the meeting to order, announcing absence of a quorum and entertaining a motion to adjourn, recess(break), or take measures to gather a quorum.

Some departments or offices find themselves waiting to start a meeting until a quorum has been achieved. This makes it all the more important for members to arrive on time.

- **Review agenda**

Always briefly review the agenda including the aims and purposes as the meeting gets started. This helps participants focus their attention and understand what will be required of them. Many of us attend meetings one after the other, so it's helpful when the chair provides this "advance organizer".

In reviewing the agenda, the chair should make it clear what decisions must be made or actions must be taken.

- **Keep discussion focused**

Focus on agenda items. Even if these items are clearly listed and emphasized, creative, intelligent, and committed people may stray from the topic. To get a runaway meeting back on track, the chair can say, "We are getting off topic and need to move back to XYZ." Then he or she repeats the topic, issues, or question again.

Some groups maintain a "parking lot" on a separate piece of paper for important issues that come up but are not directly related to the discussion. The "parking lot" can be consulted for agenda planning for succeeding meetings.

- **Encourage participation**

Effective meetings are participatory and good leaders try to get everyone involved. Idea may not come from one person and keeping a great mood that makes everyone comfortable will be the key for participation and openness for everyone in the meeting. The level of participation also depends of the nature of the meeting.

- **Help group come to decisions**

A group reaches consensus when it finally agrees on a choice and each group member can say:

"I believe that others understand my point of view"

"I believe I understand others' points of view"

"Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it (and will not undermine it) because it was arrived at openly and fairly and is the best solution for this committee or group at this time."

- **Summarize decisions**

When a group seems to have come to a consensus or decision, restate and summarize what the final decision(s) is. This helps to ensure that all members hear the same thing. Clarification at this point can prevent problems later.

- **Agree on action plan**

An action plan outlines the specifics that must be done. Not every goal needs an action plan, but for goals that involve more than one person, it's usually helpful to be specific about who will do what by when.

- **Draft agenda for next meetings**

Ask for agenda items for the next meeting from the floor or ask a small group of 2 or 3 members to work on creating agendas. People are more likely to participate in a meeting if they have had some input into building the agenda.

Even if every item suggested cannot be dealt with in a meeting, look for ways to provide information via handouts, E-mail, or creating connections with others

- **Evaluate meeting**

Before the meeting adjourns, try to do a brief evaluation. Ask some informal questions such as, "Do you feel like we accomplished what we needed to today? Did everyone participate?" The meeting leader can ask the questions with group members answering in turn, round-robin style, or the questions can be asked for anyone to answer.

Reference:

1. Gause, Donald C. and Weinberg, Gerald M.(1989), Exploring Requirements: Quality Before Design, Dorset House Publishing, New York, NY. pp.80-91
2. Kirkpatrick DL(2006) How to Conduct Productive Meetings: Strategies, Tips, and Tools to Ensure Your Next Meeting is Well Planned and Effective. Alexandria: ASTD Press; 2006.
3. Rogelberg SG, Allen JA, Shanock L, et al(2010). Employee satisfaction with meetings: a contemporary facet of job satisfaction. Hum Resour Manage 2010;49:149–72.