“TEAM MANAGEMENT SKILL”

Lecture11.

DEBRIEF AND FOLLOW UP MEETINGS BASED ON GUIDELINES TO CONDUCT EFFECTIVE MEETING.

Lecturer: Daniel HABIYAMBERE

3.3: Debrief and follow up meetings

3.3.1. Key terms

- **Debrief meetings**

Your meeting notes will be the basis for a debrief to be circulated among attendees, summarizing the discussion points, decisions made, next steps and topics earmarked for future discussions. For the next steps, make sure that you include the responsible person as well as the agreed deadline. A best practice is to circulate the debrief within 24 hours of the meeting to keep the momentum going. If there's nothing written down, then the results of a meeting can fade into nothing.

- **Follow up meetings**

Meeting follow up includes the activities conducted after the meeting. Right after the meeting, the meeting organizer follows up by sending out meeting notes and collecting feedback. If the meeting resulted in action items or other plans, the leader may also schedule a dedicated follow-up meeting to check progress.

3.3.2. Processing and distributing documentation from meetings

Once the meeting has finished it is important to ensure the momentum gained during the meeting doesn‟t diminish once the meeting is over. It is important to keep the momentum strong, especially in the immediate aftermath of the meeting. It normally falls upon the Chairperson, secretary or other nominated person to prepare and distribute documentation stemming from meetings.

1) Processing documentation

Every meeting is different and hence the documentation to be prepared will vary depending on the meeting topics and outcomes. Documents that need to be prepared include:

- Minutes of the meeting; this was discussed in the previous section
- Copies of presentations; if a presentation was made during the meeting, it is important to prepare a hard or electronic version of this
- Copies of background information; this is information that was prepared as supporting evidence for discussion in the meeting

- Course of action and responsibilities; this is often documented in the minutes
- New information to help participants achieve allocated actions – any new information or research that may have been discussed or outlined in the meeting, which may help someone achieve their actions, stemming from the meeting. For example, the meeting may have resulted in allocating a participant to prepare a new marketing strategy and promotional budget. The collection and inclusion of previous year‟s information, may help someone in this task
- Agenda for next meeting – this helps participants to understand what is required and expected for the next meeting and what will be tabled for discussion in the next meeting. This gives participants ample preparation time.

2) Distributing documentation

The most common methods to distribute documentation include:

- Delivered personally; this is the best way as it not only ensures the documentation is received by the correct person, without others having access to it, but provides the opportunity to ask or answer any questions either party may have.
- Email: this is a common method where participants are geographically separated as it allows instant and secure access to information in a cost-effective manner.
- Most documentation is prepared in electronic format, and many participants prefer to receive electronic information, over hard copy information, as is allows easier manipulation of information contained within. This method is also preferred to where large number of people are involved, it allows for a recipient to confirm receipt of documentation, and allows others to be copied into emails (normally superiors)
- Internal mail: this is a common way to send hard copy information between people in an organization
- Courier – this is used when hard and electronic (on a memory stick) documents need to be sent to a location where personal delivery is not possible and where prepared documents are preferred, such as a folder containing information in a desired format. This saves the recipient having to print and compile information sent via email.

3) **Acknowledge receipt of documentation.**

Regardless of the method chosen to send documents, it is important that the sender follows up to ensure:

- The documents have been received by the correct person
- The person understands what is required of them.

By ensuring that all necessary documentation is send and received, in a timely manner and in a method that is understood, momentum that was developed in the meeting can be maintained.

3.3.3. Informing colleagues regarding the outcomes of meetings

Types of information

There are endless types of information that must be communicated to staff, through managers and supervisors, including:

- Upcoming events; specific events relating and impacting on the business, whether internally or externally generated.
- Customer information; arriving VIP‟s and their requirements during a stay.
- New policies and procedures; new rules or ways to conduct activities.
- New products and services; including new menus, promotions, branding.
- Customer comments; relaying of positive and negative comments regarding specific outlets or staff given by customers.
- Staff movements; new or departing staff and opportunities for promotion.
- Operational issues; day to day information aimed at improving operations.

Types of action

Whilst most communication required to be known by other managers, supervisors and staff is information, at times there are direct actions that need to be taken, either:

- Directly by management or supervisors
- Through staff in consultation and direction by management and supervisors.

Some types of action that must be communicated for implementation include:

- Conduct research; through internet research, collecting ideas from staff or asking and observing customers. This may relate to topics such as what products and services. customers prefer, what items they are purchasing, areas for improvement in the eyes of staff and customers to name a few.
- Prepare a presentation – based on the research, a presentation or report may need to be prepared for the next meeting.
- Prepare a strategy or action plan – to encourage „ownership" of ideas, staff may work with managers to decide and draft a strategy to improve their departments operations
- Implement action – they may be required to implement a specific action such as a new policy or procedure.
- Act on information – they may need to act on information provided by managers resulting from meetings. For example, if a VIP is arriving, staff may need to ensure the room is prepared to his/her liking and preferences. It may be the preparation of a specific food such as a cookie.

3.3.4. Incorporating work resulting from meetings

Once any relevant information or action resulting directly from a meeting, have been prepared, distributed and explained, it now must be incorporated into work activities.

Just because the end person responsible for incorporating information and actions may be different from the person who gave the instruction, it is vital that all necessary assistance, guidance and support are given to ensure they are implemented in the most successful manner

a) Implement information and actions.

When implementing information or actions it is essential that the person who will be doing the implementation have the necessary resources to do so successfully. These resources include:

- Responsibility
- Notification to others of that person's duties or level of responsibility and authority
- Accurate instruction
- Adequate training
- Necessary resources
- Sufficient time

- Constant feedback and communication.

b) Monitor information and actions

When any information or action requires incorporation in the workplace, it is essential that management constantly monitor to ensure that it takes place in its intended method and the outcomes indeed bring about a positive and beneficial impact on operations.

This is especially true when the required change is substantial such as a new procedure or policy.

c) Obtaining feedback from staff

Whilst this section has discussed communication from management to staff, in relation to information or actions to be implemented, it is even more important to get feedback from those implementing the changes, to see how improvements can be made.

Any new information or action that is incorporated into the workplace will normally require some level of change, which is never easy for staff to do.

As a manager is the one who introduced the new information or action, they must ensure that their staff receive your support and commitment

d) Report information and actions

Often, managers are required to report back any progress or feedback relating to any new actions or information incorporated into the workplace.

By undertaking constant monitoring and collecting valuable feedback from staff, the information to be prepared and presented in the next meeting will be very valuable.

Evaluating the Meeting:

After you have completed the meeting, it is a good idea to evaluate its effectiveness. You want to get the input of your fellow officers, and if possible, talk to some of the participants to get their opinions.

To improve the meetings, it is necessary for you to be open to compliments and criticisms. You want people to be honest about their feelings and perceptions. Do not feel that you need to defend how you conducted the meeting; just allow people the time to express their view.

After hearing different opinions, you want to consider those views as compared to how you felt the meeting went. Is there room for improvement? What could have made the meeting run more smoothly? Did the group stay focused and on task.

To help you with evaluating a meeting, there is a evaluation form you can pick up from the Office for Clubs and Organizations to help you. We all have areas where we need to improve on, so be honest, and take the necessary action to make your meetings even better.

Go Through Each Key Function

Next, wade into your event debrief by going through each key function of your event and asking your team critical questions.

Key functions include…

- The planning process
- Finding the venue
- Setting up the event space
- Marketing and advertising
- Registration
- Speakers and entertainment
- Catering/food/beverages
- Decor, lighting, and signage
- Audio/video and other technology
- Guest management
- Money handling
- Sponsorships
- For each function, ask yourself at least these questions:
- Did we meet the function’s objective?
- Did we perform better than last time? If so, how? If not, why?
- What went right?
- What went wrong?
- What will we do better next time?

That last question is the most important. Use it to create action items for your next event. For instance, if you feel that guests should have known their way around the space better, create an action item to develop clearer event signage.

As you talk, make sure everyone on your team has the opportunity to speak, even if they weren't directly involved in that function. Your catering manager may not know much about how the registration desk works, but he/she could still have unique and impactful feedback.

A word of caution: You'll find it tempting during this discussion to blame external forces for your problems. For example, if the meal was served late, you might be satisfied to blame the caterer's tardiness to the event site. Avoid this at all costs. Even though some challenges might not be your fault, still ask yourself and your team how you can prevent them in the future.

Send out an Event Debrief Survey

An event debrief survey is a questionnaire that asks the same questions you would discuss at the meeting. It's for people who couldn't attend the meeting or weren't invited. You might send it to non-leadership people who work on your events, outsourced vendors (caterers, AV technicians, florists, etc.), and even your attendees.

Truthfully, your guests are the best source of feedback regarding your event. They won't have behind-the-scenes information like your team, but they can still provide a unique perspective. After all, you host events *for* your guests, so their feedback is invaluable.

You can get your guests' feedback in three ways:

1. Make your event debrief survey available *during* the event. At the very least, setup a box or booth where they can leave their comments. This way you get their feedback when it's fresh in their mind.

2. Email them the event debrief survey a few days after the event. This is a great addition to your thank you email. Host the survey as a form on your website so they can fill it out quickly. (If you ask them to print and mail back, no one will do it.)

3. Solicit feedback through your event app. With a Supervent custom event app, you can quickly create and send a survey to your guests

Use the Data from Your Event Debrief

This final step is the most important. Once you've collected data from your event debrief meeting and/or survey, it's important to *actually use it.*

Don't let that valuable information get lost in a file somewhere. Review it a few times to pack that information into your head. Consider it as you plan and set up your next event. To ensure this happens, document your notes and action items somewhere your team can access at any time.

Most importantly, bring up your action items (your answers to the question "What will we do better next time?") during your pre-event meetings with your team. Remind them of what you all discussed and how you'll make the next event better.

Reference:

2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (2012). Plan, manage and conduct meetings. 3. Trainee'smanual. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31686/ijier.Vol7.Iss1.1286

3. Hardavella, G. et al. (2017). How to give and receive feedback effectively. *Breathe*, 13: 327-333.*Innovation Education and Research,* 7*(1)*: 74-92.

4. Kema, E.A. (2019). Giving effective instructions in EFL classrooms. *International Journal for* manual. Victoria: William Angliss Institute.

5. Njambi, c. (2014).Factors influencing employee motivation and its impact on employee performance: a case of AMREF health Africa in Kenya. Unpublished Master's Thesis,United States International University-Africa