

Why do organizations need meetings?

Meetings are often referred to as places where minutes are made but hours are lost. We all know that considerable amount of time we spend in our work place gets consumed by meetings. Meetings have become an indispensable tool for increasing productivity; resolving conflict, interviewing candidates, analyzing tactics... the list goes on. While meetings are important they are also considered time wasters if they are not organized properly.

For instance a typical organization conducts a minimum of five meetings a week, where four or more people participate for around an hour to arrive at conclusions. if you calculate this turns out to be 20 or more person hours spent in a week for the company.

This means cost and it is imperative that this money is wisely spent. We shall see the typical problems an organizer of a meeting faces and some useful tips which would help him to conduct a more effective meeting.

What are the problems faced by meeting Organizers?

Some of the of the problems an Organizer of the meeting faces are:

- Getting the room with the right capacity,
- Preparing an agenda and circulating to the audience in advance,
- Providing ways for the audience to confirm their participation,
- Arranging for the resources (such as Laptop, Projectors) to improve meeting effectiveness, Having the attendees complete some action points before the meeting
- Writing and distributing the minutes of the meeting to all attendees

- Following up how the action point arrived at the meeting are progressing

In fact the meeting organizer needs to plenty of work before and after the meeting! Also an organization would benefit a lot if it can find out the number of person hours spent in conducting meetings and the returns they get out of it.

Useful tips for the organizer in scheduling a meeting

Let me try to list out the Ten Commandments for conducting an effective meeting.

1. Do not call for a meeting if the problem can be resolved by having an e-mail Interaction or with telephone conversation. This sure saves time and money.
2. Set an agenda which is clear about what needs to be achieved and circulate at least a day in advance to all the attendees. You can prefix a set of ground rules which needs to be followed during the meeting to this Agenda.
3. Start the meeting at an odd time. If you want to have a meeting to begin at 9:00 AM, it is often better to have the start of the meeting at 8:59 AM. This helps the attendees to understand your intention and be punctual for the meeting.
4. Try your best to get the meeting done with in 1-hour time. Some companies have a policy where all participants are required to stand during the entire meeting so that it becomes impossible to prolog a meeting.

5. Try to ensure that all the resources you need are available to you at least 10 minutes before the start of the meeting.
6. Try to come up with a pre meeting action point for the attendees and intimate it to them. This helps the attendees to prepare well for the meeting.
7. Designate prior to the meeting, a person to take down the minutes (summary) of the meeting. You may also designate one person to be the timekeeper for the meeting.
8. Give a reminder to all the attendees 5 minutes before the meeting. However irrespective of the attendance, start the meeting on time. Never wait for a quorum.
9. End the meetings on time. Take 5 minutes before the end of the meeting to come up with post meeting action points and identify the owners who would take the responsibility for completing the action points.
10. Ensure that the minutes of the meeting are circulated within the same day the meeting was conducted.