



## **MEETINGS**

### **1. How to prepare for a meeting**

*Meetings, whether they are one-on-one discussions or gatherings of five or twenty people, are an important part of working life – but they are also time consuming. Many people often say they are unproductive, costly, boring and many times unnecessary. Are they always needed? And so many of them?*

*Outlined below are a series of pointers to assist you decide if the latest meeting you have organised or been invited to, is really going to lead to improved efficiencies, better communication and improved profitability.*

- 1. How to prepare for a meeting**
- 2. How to conduct a successful meeting**
- 3. How to compile a meeting agenda that really works**
- 4. How to get the most out of meetings you chair**
- 5. How to make a valuable contribution to a meeting**
- 6. How to overcome problems at meetings**
- 7. How to deal with disruptive individuals at meetings**
- 8. How to reduce the number of time consuming meetings**

#### **1. How to prepare for a meeting**

*This is the first in a series of eight “How to” guides.*

- 1. Make sure you have called the meeting for a purpose**
  - to solve a problem,
  - to co-ordinate activities
  - to disseminate and discuss urgent information
  - to reach consensus or decision
  - to build morale, or
  - to reconcile conflict
- 2. Prepare for a benchmark of productivity**
  - be clear on your purpose and outcomes
  - prepare a checklist of what you want to accomplish
- 3. Select the participants wisely**
  - only those who need to attend should attend
  - consider inviting participants to be present at particular time/s, when they are required according to the agenda item/s



**4. Select the right time and place for the meeting**

- meet only when you have the information required for decision making and you can be assured the required people will be in attendance
- ensure the venue is accessible to all, yet sufficiently remote to avoid interruptions
- check out and book the location – seating, lighting, ventilation, equipment

**5. Prepare and distribute an agenda that will work**

- the more care with the agenda, the more productive the meeting
- agenda include:
  - date, time,
  - place and duration of meeting
  - list of items to be discussed in sequence
  - detailing for each item who will lead the discussion, time allocated, and importantly the objective ( information sharing/discussion only/decision required/problem to be solved)

**6. Despatch agenda and background papers**

- by giving advance notice and distributing the agenda and supporting documents for all items, you demonstrate your thoroughness and instil confidence in your leadership

**7. Do your home work on the participants**

- if emotional or controversial issues, for example will be discussed during the meeting, it is a good idea to talk through these items with some of the key participants beforehand. Consider their reactions and how to handle

**8. Gather appropriate tools for the meeting**

- do you have ...note paper, pens, flipchart, whiteboard, refreshments, overhead projector, telephone, etc

**9. Be prepared – psychologically**

- Consider the following, re: mental preparation
  - know the meeting process and your role as chairperson
  - do your homework
  - believe you can lead
  - seize the opportunity
  - aim high

Reference: Flanagan, N. & Finger, J. “Just about everything a Manager needs to know” Plum Press Brisbane, Australia 1998.