

SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS



Welcome!

If you're like most people, you'll know that the meetings in your organisation are capable of achieving so much more than they currently do. In this Egide I'm sharing some techniques that I guarantee will increase the success of your meetings, just like they've done for countless of our clients.

It's not just about chairing. Imagine if you had some great tips too to help you contribute more confidently and effectively and raise your profile at meetings. Well, I've included some of those tips as well.

So this Egide will really help you, your colleagues and your organisation:

Save money

Increase motivation

Take massive action (great decisions and follow-through..... you know, that all important bit that most meetings fail to deliver!)





As you'll know there's nothing better to help people learn than some practice. So if your organisation is serious about and committed to having really productive meetings that achieve the results you want get in touch and we'll come and deliver an impressive action-centred workshop on meetings. That way your people can practise these skills and more and you'll see a rapid return on your investment.

To chat to us about this learning event please call on 0845 165 6269 or email alison@leadinglightlearning.com and I'll personally talk through how we can help you.

Let me know how you get on with the Eguide tips.

Best wishes

Alison

Alison Miles-Jenkins BA (Hons) FCIPD
Chief Executive

PS I've included a template of a Chairperson's agenda as a little bonus for you.



**Tips to save
money, increase
motivation and take
massive action at
meetings**

**“Success occurs
when opportunity
meets
preparation”**

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1. Do a quick appraisal of how much meetings actually cost your business. (I'm pretty sure you won't have done that before). It's pretty easy to get an indicator - work out the number of attendees, salaries plus on-costs percentage, room hire, heating, catering etc and even opportunity cost of attendees being away from their desks.
2. Do this on a per hour basis and multiply by the length of the meeting. It could cost more than you think. Then think about the success rate of that meeting, time invested/wasted and actions taken afterwards (or not!) Money could be bleeding out of your organisation without you realising it. Who really needs to attend? Are you getting your money's worth? Would it be a good investment to restrict numbers, length and frequency of those meetings?
3. Don't have meetings for the sake of it - sounds obvious but common sense is often not common practice and nowhere is that more true than at meetings.
4. Start meetings on time and don't take spare copies of papers with you for people who've forgotten/not bothered to get organised and bring theirs. Remember, people generally like belonging to clubs with high standards so start developing some for your meetings.
5. Think about venue, group members, and type of meeting. If appropriate, consider 'standing room only'. Some organisations use stand up meetings really effectively but there are some important points to consider.





6. Restrict the number of items on the agenda and always issue Action Centred Agendas (ACAs).
7. Make it clear that as participants have an ACA, preparation is key for quality discussion, engagement and optimum decisions.
8. Time limit routine items on the agenda.
9. Place routine items early on and avoid 'warm up waffle'. Follow with major decisional/problem solving/challenging items. Then finish with lighter items, of less importance but with a positive feel.
10. Be aware of your problem solving and decision making processes at meetings. Stifled creativity, dominant group members, an over-bearing or controlling chair, with resulting poor listening and questioning skills can lead you up the garden path. A lack of clarity about which part of the problem solving and decision making process is happening at any one time can lead to poor problem solving and wrong decisions being taken. Imagine how much money that could cost your organisation in the longer term.
11. If necessary, support the chairpeople in your organisation with some training to help them in their role, identify their current strengths and weaknesses and an action plan to help them further.
12. Use techniques to tactfully include the quieter, newer, or less experienced members of the group. They can be a great source of fresh insights. Put them on the spot and they'll develop a meetings phobia! Encourage and support them and you'll be surprised how valuable their perspectives can be. Their ideas could even generate or save a lot of money.
13. Use your skills when chairing to build a construction team, not a demolition gang.



14. Focus on the agenda, the team and the individual simultaneously.
15. Be realistic. How many people are attending, how many agenda items are there and what are their objectives, what's the type of meeting and time allowed?
16. Use the chairperson's agenda - I've included a template with this guide.
17. Ensure you have a competent, trained minute taker.
18. When making contributions group members should KISS (stands for Keep It Short and Simple!).
19. Direct your eye contact around the room when speaking, not just to the chair.
20. Don't motormouth on. Build in signaling clues for people to follow up if they want to hear more from you.

21. Don't sit opposite people you don't get on with or disagree with. Sit next to them, or one along.
22. If you are nervous as a group member, speak early on when the discussion is low key and low risk. (I owe a lot of my career to this point - perhaps I'll tell you more about that another time!)
23. Really prepare. Don't rely on the 'It will be alright on the night' syndrome. Experienced actors know it won't be. Preparation is the key to success.



24. If you are new to a meeting go through six months of past agendas, minutes and background papers. That will bring you up to speed with content, process, key contributors, jargon and abbreviations, etc. By the way, that's a great tip for minute takers from our taking notes and minutes training course.



25. Remember, as a group member you have the right to express your views, and have your views listened to and reacted to. Don't let your contributions or suggestions drop like a stone into mud. Ask for feedback and comments.
26. Giving one key point and one piece of support is better than droning on and ending up talking yourself and everyone else out of a good viewpoint. You can always build in those signaling clues to indicate you have more to share if people want to know more.
27. If you don't know too much about the topic you can still get involved in the discussion by asking questions and using summarising and clarifying skills. It's what we call getting involved in the process rather than the content.
28. Make sure you know at least 20 reasons why we use questions as a skill at meetings. They come in really handy.
29. Avoid negative language and switch to positives. It can have a magic wand effect.
30. Always commit to follow up action. After all it's the end result that counts and you'll create a great impression with people that count too.
31. Enthusiasm, genuine interest and humour (not jokes) are infectious and are indicative of our emotional intelligence. A great way to influence, persuade, inspire and get people on side.
32. Don't be too eager to volunteer to take the minutes. It may restrict your contribution and affect others' perceptions of you.
33. If your meetings involve presentations ensure those presenting know how to give multi-sensory, engaging, insightful and motivational input rather than put other group members through death by powerpoint with bullet points, text heavy slides or graphs and charts that no-one can read on the screen.



34.If you have to deal with aggression, emotionally-laden or difficult contributions, then the PACR technique works really well: Pause, acknowledge, clarify, respond (not react).

35.And finally, back to the idea of clubs with high standards. Make it clear as a chair that avoiding taking action and follow up actions post meeting is unacceptable and decide how this will be addressed.

On the next page is an example of a Chairperson’s Agenda

Agenda Heading	Agenda Item Number	Who may lead on this item & possible points/issues	My points/views	Facilitation notes and comments	Notes from meetings	Decisions Taken	Actions to be taken



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Follow these tips and you will find a demonstrable difference in the way your meetings work and the outcomes they are able to deliver.



Your business will save money, increase the motivation of group members and encourage them to take massive action.

Don't let your meetings become a practical alternative to work.

Why not talk to us about our chairing effective meetings and minute and note-taking in-house learning events? Based on simulations with action learning and even more top tips and expertise, you'll fast track results and get an immediate return on investment.

Call 0845 165 6269 or email: enquiries@leadinglightlearning.com

Kindest regards

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CONTACT US

