

Unit 328

Information Pack

Understand How to Lead Effective Meetings



INTRODUCTION

As with so many things in life and work, the better prepared you are, the more impact you are likely to have in any meeting.

Your team will look to you to help them make sense of wider organisational communications, and to understand the implications for the team as a whole. It is important to confirm what has been discussed and agreed, and to make a commitment about what the next steps will be. As a group, decide who will take responsibility to deliver specific actions, ensuring that everyone is clear about their roles and the timescales involved.

Leading meetings is an important aspect of a manager's role. Whether your meetings are formal and structured, or informal and flexible. Meetings which lack direction or fail to deliver outcomes are a waste of everyone's valuable time. It is therefore essential that the meetings you lead are well planned, focused and result in real action.

Action planning following a meeting can assist in following up efficiently on items that have been discussed. Completed actions will also allow attendees to feel that the meeting has been effective.

This information pack will provide you with guidance on effective planning and preparation for a meeting, the importance of visual aids and the value of achievable actions being completed following a meeting.

GUIDANCE

This document is prepared to break the unit material down into bite size chunks. You will see the learning outcomes above treated in their own sections. Therein you will encounter the following structures;

Purpose

Explains *why* you need to study the current section of material. Quite often learners are put off by material which does not initially seem to be relevant to a topic or profession. Once you understand the importance of new learning or theory you will embrace the concepts more readily.

Theory

Conveys new material to you in a straightforward fashion. To support the treatments in this section you are strongly advised to follow the given hyperlinks, which may be useful documents or applications on the web.

Example

The examples/worked examples are presented in a knowledge-building order. Make sure you follow them all through. If you are feeling confident then you might like to treat an example as a question, in which case cover it up and have a go yourself. Many of the examples given resemble assignment questions which will come your way, so follow them through diligently.

Question

Questions should not be avoided if you are determined to learn. Please do take the time to tackle each of the given questions, in the order in which they are presented. The order is important, as further knowledge and confidence is built upon previous knowledge and confidence. As an Online Learner it is important that the answers to questions are immediately available to you. Contact your Unit Tutor if you need help.

Challenge

You can really cement your new knowledge by undertaking the challenges. A challenge could be to download software and perform an exercise. An alternative challenge might involve a practical activity or other form of research.

Video

Videos on the web can be very useful supplements to your distance learning efforts. Wherever an online video(s) will help you then it will be hyperlinked at the appropriate point.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
GUIDANCE	3
Meetings.....	5
Purpose of a Meeting?	5
Deciding Who Should Attend Meetings.....	7
The Role of Meeting Participants.....	9
Preparation for Meetings.....	10
Venue and Room Preparation.....	11
Effective Meetings	12
The Agenda	13
Positive and Negative Actions.....	17
Do You Know the Secret to A High-Performing Meeting?.....	17
5 Ways to Make Your Meetings More Positive.....	18
The Effects of Behaviour on a Meeting.....	19
Purpose of Minutes.....	21
Taking Effective Minutes.....	22
Purpose of Action Plans	24
Action Plan Template	25

Meetings

Definition of a Meeting

'A gathering of people for a particular purpose' (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

'An occasion when people gather to discuss things and make decisions, either in person or using phones, the internet etc.' (MacMillan Dictionary)

Purpose of a Meeting?

You can be certain that *'meetings for meetings sake'* will not please anyone! Every meeting should have a clear purpose. There needs to be an apparent reason to bring people together to discuss and make decisions on pre-determined issues.

Well-organised and well-managed meetings are important for the success of organisations and provide the opportunity to meet to develop group cohesion and develop special projects, tasks and activities. Whilst most of the actual work undertaken by the attendees occurs between and away from meetings, meetings enable progress to be measured towards various agreed priorities, enable the sharing of ideas and facilitate group decision-making. Properly planned and well executed meetings can be efficient, effective, results focused, and motivating.

Reasons for having meetings include:

- Facilitation of rapid decision-making
- Exchanging ideas and opinions
- Disseminating information
- Making staff feel involved
- Developing teamwork.

Effective meetings make efficient use of attendees' time with participants leaving the meeting with a sense that the group has achieved the objectives of the meeting. Everyone should be clear on the actions required of him or her following the meeting.

Meetings are not needed when, for example:

- Content can be covered by e-mail, memorandum, bulletin or other means of circulating information
- There is no defined purpose or goal
- Key people are unavailable.

Challenge

List the different kind of meetings that typically take place in organisations.



Meetings come in a variety of forms, such as formal, informal, decision-making meetings, informational meetings, instructional meetings and negotiations. Your list may have included examples such as:

- Management meetings
- Team meetings
- Ad hoc meetings
- Emergency meetings
- Board meetings
- Investigative meetings
- Inaugural meetings, the first meeting for a new project for example
- Project progress meetings
- Off-site meetings - 'away days'
- One-on-one meetings
- Staff meetings
- Work meetings which produce a product or intangible result such as a decision
- Committee meetings
- Business meetings (with, clients, colleagues, etc.)
- Co-ordinating meetings
- Planning meetings.