

Meetings

Self-Coaching Guide

How can I have productive meetings?

Holding a meeting can be an efficient and effective way for a group of people or team to communicate with each other about a common topic. Group communication covers sharing information, consulting, making decisions, and being creative. Productive meetings can achieve a great deal in a short period of time. Unproductive meetings can waste precious time, resources, and sometimes leave people feeling frustrated, demotivated, and uncooperative. The productivity of most meetings can be improved greatly by following some simple guidelines on their preparation, execution, and follow up.

Meeting Preparation

- Make sure it has a clear purpose and intended outcomes. (If it's recurring, assess if it's still needed.)
- Determine if it's needed or whether its purpose could be achieved better some other way (e.g. by short phone call or email).
- Ensure the agenda is not too long/ambitious for one meeting and the time allocated is appropriate.
- Allow time for comfort breaks if the meeting is over one hour.
- Schedule meetings in 15-minute increments rather than in one-hour increments.
- Keep the list of attendees short by inviting only the people who are really needed for its purpose.
- Issue meeting papers in advance so attendees have adequate time to read and reflect. Tell everyone to read the material before the meeting and have their thoughts and questions ready.

Meeting Execution

- Start and finish the meeting on time, irrespective of who is late (including senior members of staff).
- Allow a short time at the start of the meeting for chit-chat and banter, to build up some rapport.
- Check everyone understands the purpose and intended outcome(s) of the meeting.
- Appoint a chairperson to keep it to the agenda; control the talkative (who may dominate the contributions) and draw out the silent (who may have important contributions to make).
- Appoint a note taker to record the decisions, actions, who is actioned, and timescale for completion.
- Appoint a time keeper to ensure the meeting keeps to time.
- Agree the date, time and place of the next meeting (if it's a recurring meeting).

Meeting Follow Up

- Send out the notes from the meeting to all attendees and any other interested parties.
- Send out the invitations for the next meeting (if it's a recurring meeting).
- Get feedback from the attendees on how they felt the meeting went and how it could be improved.

*"The least productive people are usually the ones who are most in favour of holding meetings."
Thomas Sowell*

More Information

M +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** hello@paulhollywell.com **L** www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell **W** www.paulhollywell.com