

Introduction: Meetings often waste time and are painful for participants – not because they're not important, but because they're mismanaged.

This workshop arms leaders with helpful tips, tools, techniques and strategies for facilitating, influencing and supporting highly productive meetings.

Payoff: Participants will be able to:

- Identify key elements of a productive meeting
- Structure meetings in ways that heighten meeting effectiveness
- Employ meeting processes for better participation and communication
- Enlist three proven methods to effectively discuss key issues in meetings

Leaders have a responsibility for facilitating effective meetings to get work accomplished. And as participants, leaders have a further responsibility to ensure the meetings they attend are productive for everyone.

Leaders must also be adept at creating meetings that foster input and participation. The most productive meetings are participant-centered, not leader-centered.

11 Elements of a Productive Meeting

1. Excellent facilitation
2. A clear purpose
3. An agenda
4. Clear meeting roles and responsibilities
5. Recordkeeping during the meeting
6. Brainstorming and exploring
7. The freedom to disagree
8. Active listening and communication
9. Shared responsibility for disruptive behaviors
10. Ground rules
11. Action items

A Clear Purpose and Agenda for the Meeting

A clear statement of purpose tells participants why they're there and where they're going as a group. The agenda then provides additional details on what participants will do during the meeting to achieve its purpose.

Brainstorming and Exploring

Brainstorming gets diverse ideas on the table and is a great way to foster participation. It serves as a basis for effective problem solving and decision making.

The Freedom to Disagree

Some of the best ideas are born out of differing opinions. Robust conversations about differing opinions can lead to even better outcomes – a blend of many ideas. It is important that everyone feels the freedom to share ideas.

Shared Responsibility for Disruptive Behaviors

Leaders must keep meetings on track, and sometimes that means addressing disruptive conduct. Meeting participants also need to intervene when necessary – it's their meeting, too.

Action Items

Action items at the end of a meeting drive things forward and ensure the meeting is productive for everyone. Three simple questions guide an effective action item:

- *What* action will be taken?
- *Who* is responsible for the action?
- By *when* will it be completed?

Summary

Participants walk away with a vast selection of techniques and strategies they can employ to create and facilitate more productive meetings. In addition, they learn a variety of simple methods for enhancing communication, participation and engagement in meetings.