Communication and Effective Meeting Management

Communication Blueprint
Effective Sender Checklist

✓ Know your audience
✓ Know what you are trying to communicate
✓ Create organization and order in what you are communicating
✓ Eliminate “noise” whenever possible
✓ Invite two-way communication to ensure understanding
✓ Don’t assume anything and don’t pass off responsibility to the receiver

Effective Receive Checklist

✓ Listen for purpose and intention
✓ Listen actively (review, evaluate, paraphrase)
✓ Eliminate noise whenever possible
✓ Build structure and organize your thoughts
✓ Don’t respond until you have ensured understanding
✓ Don’t judge until you have ensured understanding
Preparing an Effective Meeting

1. Determine if a meeting is necessary
2. Determine and prioritize meeting objective(s)
3. Conduct situational analysis
4. Determine meeting format
5. Develop meeting agenda
6. Identify and invite participants
7. Determine and prepare appropriate meeting logistics
8. Prepare to conduct the meeting effectively

Determine if a meeting is necessary

The Cost of Meeting
- Time consuming
- Substitute talk for action
- Indecisive
- Suppress convictions
- Not suited to all tasks

The Benefit of Meeting
- Stronger commitment
- Better decisions
- Situational Awareness
- Empathy
- Strengthen Relationships
- Increased understanding of others
90% of meetings fail to produce an identifiable achievement.

When meeting participants were asked “Did this meeting accomplish its original objective?” the most common answer was “I have no idea.”

Determine and prioritize meeting objective(s)

As a result of this meeting, we will have achieved:

If you can’t answer, you can’t meet.

Determine and prioritize meeting objective(s)

- Be SMART in defining your objective:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Realistic
  - Timely

- Determine if multiple meetings are required

Don’t mistake **OBJECTIVES** *(why)* for **AGENDA ITEMS** *(what or how)*
Conduct Situational Analysis

- Analyze the situation
  - Circumstances, mood, atmosphere, background, etc
  - Be able to tell the story

- Analyze the audience
  - The needs and interests of those attending
  - What is their typical influence on a meeting like this?
  - Do I want to capitalize on or blunt that influence?

- Analyze yourself
  - Your style, your mindset, your personal aims, etc.

Conduct Situational Analysis

Your Goals | Joint Goals | Other's Goals
Determine Meeting Format

- Informative Meeting
- Discussion/Brainstorming Meeting
- Decision Making/Problem Solving Meeting

Discussion/Brainstorming

- Make sure participants are familiar with the issues and topics
- Determine clear ground rules
- Plan to capture discussion and ideas
- Moderate instead of dominate. Get everyone involved
- Review, summarize and interpret
Decision Making/Problem Solving Meeting

- "A problem well stated is a problem half solved." - Charles Franklin Kettering (1876-1958)
- Ensure that group decision making or problem solving is appropriate to the situation.
- Adhere to a detailed agenda to ensure high-quality decisions. Go slow to go fast!
- Determine multiple solutions: Pro and con each before deciding on top choices
- Manage a balance between group cohesion and critical evaluation.
- Take time to determine causes...be sure to move on to solutions

Sample agenda:
- Get agreement on issue or what needs to be decided
- Determine criteria for success
- Present and/or creatively identify options
- Pro/con the options (cases for and against)
- Open discussion including all persons, all opinions
- Select and rank order options (vote, decision-maker statement, consensus, or whatever method appropriate)
- Determine clear next steps for all parties
- Plan for follow-up and evaluation
Develop Meeting Agenda

Focus on First Things First

- Cover the topics in order of importance
  - If one topic naturally leads to another, sequence in a logical order
  - Allow for warm-up before covering controversial topics
  - Try to begin and end on a positive note

- Determine subtopics and activates
Develop Meeting Agenda

Insert breaks, introduction and conclusion:

- **Breaks**
  - Breaks should be provided every 60 - 90 minutes
  - Breaks should be short 5 - 10 minutes

Develop Meeting Agenda

Insert breaks, introduction and conclusion:

- **Introduction should account for enough time to:**
  - Make introductions if necessary
  - Present and agree upon meeting objectives
  - Present meeting agenda
  - Establish and agree upon meeting ground rules
  - Assign roles and responsibilities
Insert breaks, introduction and conclusion:

• Conclusion should account for enough time to:
  o Review and summarize
    ▪ Conclusion is often the most memorable part of the meeting
  o Gain agreement and commitments on next steps
    ▪ Be specific about action items and responsibilities
  o Discuss outstanding questions

Identify and Invite Participants

Insert breaks, introduction and conclusion:

• Who should attend?
  o Those who can benefit enough to be worth their time
  o Those who can contribute enough to justify their time
Identify and Invite Participants

Insert breaks, introduction and conclusion:

• Invitations should include:
  o Names of all meeting participants
  o Coordinator’s contact info
  o Meeting date, time, and location
  o Meeting objectives and agenda
  o Preparations required by participants

Identify and Invite Participants

Insert breaks, introduction and conclusion:

• Determine Roles & Responsibilities
  o What roles are needed?
  o Who is the best fit for each role?
  o Have you communicated the roles?
Determine and Prepare Appropriate Meeting Logistics

- Don’t forget the basics. Everyone is subject to distractions and basic needs
- Choose and setup the room to best support meeting format
  - Horseshoe, Round Table, Classroom, Small Groups
- Choose and setup audio visuals
- Account for technological/connectivity needs

Planning and Preparing for Meetings

- Gather necessary information
- If you are leading as a team, meet with the team to prepare
- Develop presentation outline (going deeper than the agenda)
- Anticipate questions, conflicts, distractions and develop responses
- Practice delivering presentation and responses
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Conducting an Effective Meeting

1. Communicate effectively
2. Manage the climate and dynamics
3. Keep the meeting on track and on task
4. Manage difficult situations and participants
5. End Strong with clarity and commitments
### Manage the Climate and Dynamics

- Take responsibility for the climate and the dynamics
- Choose an appropriate leadership style
- Lead by example
- Be observant
- Intervene when needed
  - Don’t let small problems become big problems

### Manage Difficult Situations and Participants

- Determine severity of the situation – respond appropriate to the severity
- Don’t react, step back until you find common ground
  - Bring it back to respect for the group and the group’s time
  - Bring it back to the objective of the meeting
  - Bring it back to the common goals and common needs
- Deal with chronic problems outside of the meeting format
End Strong With Clarity and Commitments

- Type and distribute the notes and information from the meeting
- Reinforce commitments and agreements
- Plan to follow-up on commitments
- Plan for follow-up meetings
- Evaluate meeting effectiveness

Conduct the Meeting Effectively

1. Communicate effectively
2. Manage the climate and dynamics
3. Keep the meeting on track and on task
4. Manage difficult situations and participants
5. Evaluate and follow up