

Effective Staff Meetings: 7 Must-Haves

HOW MANY TIMES have you walked away from a staff meeting wondering, “What was the point?” Meetings that lack purpose can leave us drained, frustrated, and all but craving a cigarette—even if we don’t smoke.

As a manager, you can conduct meetings where goals are met, problems get solved, and staff members walk away feeling focused, energized and valued.

“I’ve searched all the parks in all the cities, and found no statues of committees.”

G.K. Chesterton

The 7 Must-Haves

1. A purpose that passes the snow-day test.

Imagine on the day of your meeting, a snowstorm keeps you and your staff homebound. Could you accomplish the meeting’s mission in some other way (e.g., conference call, email)? Could you get by without rescheduling? If not, you can be confident the meeting is worth scheduling. But if the answer to either of those questions is “Yes,” why bother?

2. A clear goal, or set of goals. What needs to be accomplished? What’s at stake? Who needs to attend, and who simply needs to be kept informed? Consider using a [meeting-cost calculator](#) to gain further insight into who needs to attend and how long the meeting should last.

3. A clear agenda, sent in advance. Allow time for staff to send you any changes, so you can send a final agenda before the meeting. Taking these steps shows respect for your staff’s time and contribution—while letting them know you expect them to come prepared. Your agenda should include the meeting location, start/end time, objectives, who’s expected to attend, and who’s accountable for each item on the list.

4. Meeting “ground rules.” Will you start the meeting on time, even if someone is late? Does your staff know where you stand on the use of cell phones and email? Do you have standards in place for how staff are to treat one another? Identifying and upholding even a few simple ground rules will help keep the focus of your meetings on the work at hand.

5. A carefully chosen environment. The ideal environment suits the meeting’s purpose, is accessible and well lit, has the required audio-visual equipment, and is comfortable, without inviting naps!

6. A designated leader. Every effective meeting needs someone to lead from start to finish, and to walk the line between allowing others to be heard, and keeping the meeting on track. A good leader sets a positive, energetic tone while making optimum use of the group’s time.

7. A designated note-taker. Have someone on your team track who’s in attendance, key outcomes, decisions made, next steps (including who’s responsible), and so on. Meeting minutes help keep the group informed and accountable—and if you ever need documentation for more serious matters (e.g., performance issues), detailed minutes can be a lifesaver.

Conclusion

Running effective meetings isn’t hard—it just takes planning and practice. Your staff will notice and appreciate your efforts. For more information on how we assist new managers, please click [here](#).

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