Meeting Management

Objectives

• Recognise the characteristics of a good meeting.
• Learn how to prepare for, structure and facilitate effective meetings.
• Devise an action plan to improve your ability to run good face to face meetings.
Agenda

1. Introduction and Warm Up

2. Meetings Step by Step
   - Meeting objectives
   - Writing Effective Agendas
   - Structure and Facilitate
   - Summarize and Record

3. Action Planning

Meetings Bloody Meetings

- Best known as a comic actor for Monty Python, A Fish Called Wanda, and now as Q in James Bond films.
- Started Video Arts for business training
- 1976, John Cleese plays the middle manager.
- 2012 remake, Cleese returns as the judge.
Meetings Can Be a Waste

A recent survey said:
- 49% felt they wasted at least 3 hours a week in meetings
- The more senior they were, the more meetings they went to
- 17 hours per week spent at meetings
- Running meetings – a crucial part of their jobs (80%)

Plus:
- You don’t learn from experience
- People copy your bad habits

Monster Meetings and Miracle Meetings

• Pair up
• Share stories of meeting disasters
• What went wrong?
• Now share stories of successful meetings
• What made them successful?
### Notes on Meeting Monsters, Meeting Miracles

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<th>Characteristics of Monster Meetings</th>
<th>Characteristics of Miracle Meetings</th>
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## Agenda

1. **Introduction and Warm Up**

2. **Meetings Step by Step**
   - Meeting objectives
   - Writing Effective Agendas
   - Structure and Facilitate
   - Summarize and Record

3. **Action Planning**

## Objectives

1. What are you trying to achieve?
2. Is a meeting the best way to achieve the objective?
3. If so, who will need to be there?
4. What role will each person play?
5. What information will each person need to be successful?

2012 Swimming and Diving Champions!
Meeting Objectives

**Consider:**
- The sum of all of the hourly rates of the people at the meeting.
- Other valuable activities you are taking people away from
- The effects on morale of too many meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Uses for Meetings</th>
<th>Bad Uses for Meetings</th>
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When to Hold a Meeting

Notes Page

<table>
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<th>Good Uses for Meetings</th>
<th>Bad Uses for Meetings</th>
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Writing Meeting Agendas

- A schedule of activities that will achieve the meeting’s objectives.
- Enough detail that people will be able to prepare.
- Estimated time for each item
- Who will lead each section
- Items grouped logically
- Most time given to most important items, not the most urgent ones.
## Writing Agenda Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stated Agenda Item</th>
<th>What they thought it was about</th>
<th>What should it have been called?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving company communications</td>
<td>• Giving sales and accounts direct access to the data.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Internet upgrade.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Intranet redesign.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Writing Agenda Items

<table>
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<th>Stated Agenda Item</th>
<th>What they thought it was about</th>
<th>What should it have been called?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on maintenance of B-1265s and B219s</td>
<td>• Reducing maintenance expenses</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sequence of Agenda Items

• Beginning
  – Report on actions since last meeting
  – Short, easy to handle agenda items
  – Gives people time to arrive
  – Allows people to warm up

• Middle
  – Items that require substantial discussion

• End
  – Note taker summarizes action commitments.

Supporting Materials

• What do you want people to do to prepare for the meeting?
• What documents, data, or other media will be needed to successfully accomplish the objectives?
Agenda Writing Exercise

• Form groups of 3-4
• Read the Agenda Writing Case Study
• Step 1: List all of the agenda items and give them appropriate titles
• Step 2: Prioritize them by importance
• Step 3: Assign time intervals to them
• Step 4: Put them in a logical sequence
• Write your group’s agenda on a flip chart
Agenda Writing
Case Study

Exercise
Use the information on the next few pages to produce an agenda for the meeting referred to in the brief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human resources manager's brief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are the Human resources manager of Portrad Financial Services International Inc., a company employing roughly 5,000 people. You have 20 people in your department and you are responsible for all HR activities in the company, including training. You report to the Operations director.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You are based at the head office, which houses the following departments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number employed</th>
<th>Dept. manager reports to</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Finance director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data processing</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Finance director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele-sales</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Sales director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sales director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate planning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Operations director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services dept.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Operations director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every two months the managers of these head office departments meet to discuss human resources issues. You chair these meetings. The meetings are normally held in a conference room on the third floor. But this is due for redecoration, so the next meeting will be held in the Boardroom.

The meeting will be in three weeks time on 22 April, starting at 2 pm.

Your task is prepare the meeting, using the attached papers. For the purpose of this exercise, today's date is 1 April.
## Minutes of previous meeting
Minutes of department managers' HR meeting, 26 February

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>George Davis</th>
<th>Accounts manager</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helen Green</td>
<td>Data processing manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry Conway</td>
<td>Market research manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dilip Patel</td>
<td>Corporate planning manager:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tessa Blake</td>
<td>Manager, legal services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ian McCrae</td>
<td>Tele-sales manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth Jones</td>
<td>Briefing co-ordinator (for Item 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graham Knight</td>
<td>Office layout planner (for Item 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Human resources manager</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The meeting dealt with the following subjects:

**1 Matters arising from the previous meeting**
In response to a question raised by Helen Green, the HR manager told the group that there were no plans to increase the pay of reception staff. Other strategies for reducing turnover and increasing performance will be developed. Other departments will then not need to worry about higher pay rates impacting equity in their departments.

**2 Team briefing**
Ruth Jones reported that all the arrangements for the introduction of regular team briefing meetings to update staff about important changes in the company had been made, including the training of briefers. A few managers and supervisors (about 3%) missed the training, mostly because of sickness. The first brief would be delivered on 1–2 March and the second on 5–6 April. Ruth will report on progress to the next HR meeting on 22 April.

**3 New layout for 4th. Floor**
The group was consulted to resolve issues in the major office move, including space allocations, privacy, proximity to other groups, and security for certain aspects of data processing. Solutions to all of these issues were found. This subject will be discussed again in four months’ time when the move has been completed.

**4 New parking spaces allocations**
Due to construction delays, no progress will be possible on this for six months. The new team briefing system will be used to tell staff that nothing is happening until then.
**Portrad Financial Services International email**

To: HR manager  
From: Catering supervisor  
Date: 25 March  
Subject: New ovens

The new ovens will be installed on 14 May. We will therefore not be able to serve hot food on that day or the day after. The salad and sandwich bars will be extended to compensate.

Mention at HR Meeting, 22 April. Add to HQ core brief for May team briefing

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**Rough notes from a phone conversation between the HR manager and the Accounts manager**

30 March

George Davis called. Two of his people had argument with night security guard about access to the data processing facility when working late. Wants to raise at next HR meeting.  
Talked to security company managing director. No great problem, he thinks, but remember to circulate his letter confirming phone conversation with agenda for 22 April.
Letter from managing director of security firm to HR manager
Fortress Buildings
27–34 Old King Street
London SW23P 9BZ

The Human Resources Manager
Portrad Financial Services International
Roxburgh House
London EC1 XYZ

Dear

I am writing to confirm my understanding of the difference of opinion which arose between one of my night security guards and two members of your Accounts department last Tuesday.

The incident apparently happened at 9.20 pm. The two accounts people were about to enter part of your data processing facility. This is restricted to those with special passes, which these two don't have. As they were accompanied by the section leader responsible for that particular restricted area, they may have felt that it was a little heavy handed of the security man to stop them, though according to him he didn't have to argue about it.

I am glad to know from our phone conversation that you agree with the action he took.

I look forward to our meeting next week.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Dare
Managing Director

Email to Human Resources Manager: 6

Portrad Financial Services International
Internal memo

To: All departmental managers

From: Maintenance supervisor

Date: 30 March

Subject: Fire alarms

We will be testing the fire alarms on 22 April at 2.30 pm. Please warn your staff.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email to HR manager</th>
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<tr>
<td>Portrad Financial Services International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal memo</td>
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<td><strong>To:</strong> Human resources manager</td>
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<td><strong>From:</strong> John Maxwell, Human resources officer</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong> 28 March</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Performance Management Program</td>
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</table>

You asked me to carry out a quick, informal investigation of the operation of the Performance Management Program. I have analysed the information we have in the Human resources department and spoken to the managers of the Accounts department, Data processing and Tele-sales. I have also spoken on the phone to five Human resources officers from the larger units round the country.

The main conclusions are:

1. The system is not being adhered to. Only 30% of the forms are returned on time without prompting. 20% are never returned, no matter how many reminders the managers concerned receive. In some parts of the company it is taking nearly three months to complete the cycle which, given that we have got a maximum of six levels of management, is quite unacceptable.

2. Many of the performance appraisals are superficial affairs. I am told that some appraisals take less than half an hour and there is evidence that few managers take the process of rating seriously.

3. There is a lot of cynicism about the program amongst line managers. They see it as a chore imposed upon them by senior management and Human resources. Few managers see any benefits in it, either for themselves or their subordinates.

You also asked for my opinions. I don't think that the system can be improved by educating/exhorting/instructing those managers who operate it. I believe the program must be redesigned. At the moment it is too centred on the qualities of individuals, rather than on what they achieve. I think we should design a new program which focuses much more on performance and sell it to the line managers as a tool that will help them do their jobs better.
Email to HR manager

Portrad Financial Services International
Internal memo

To: Human resources manager

From: Operations director

Date: 15 March

Subject: Performance Management Program

I am increasingly getting the impression that managers at all levels are merely paying lip service to appraisals. At a time when we need the maximum contribution from every employee, this won't do. The scheme must be used and it must deliver benefits.

I would therefore like you to prepare a report on the working of the scheme and to canvass the views of departmental managers, both here in head office and at our units round the country.

Perhaps you would raise the issue at your next head office Human Resources meeting, so that we can discuss it at the end of April.

Email to HR manager

Portrad Financial Services International
Internal memo

To: Human resources manager

From: Helen Green, Data processing manager

Date: 29 March

Subject: Training requests

I recently spoke to John Maxwell from your department about the performance management program. I have subsequently raised this informally with some of my section heads and supervisors.

One of their main complaints is that training requests recorded on appraisal forms are rarely met. I suppose this is explained by the peak in demand which the appraisal cycle creates for your trainers? I would find it helpful to discuss this issue at our Human Resources meeting next month.
Email to HR manager

Portrad Financial Services International
Internal memo

To: Human resources manager

From: Ruth Jones, Briefing co-ordinator

Date: 10 March

Subject: First team briefing

This note confirms today's discussion. The first brief went reasonably well, but we have (as expected) some improvements to make and problems to solve. In particular

- A lot of the meetings were far too long (1 hour 45 minutes is the record!)

- A major reason for the length was the complexity of the core brief. There was just too much information coming down from above. Apart from the time problem, it also made it very hard for managers to find space for their own agenda items.

I am following up the questions which were asked but could not be answered at the meetings.

I will talk individually to managers of departments and other briefers about these problems. I would appreciate your support on the core brief issue. I will do another follow-up after the next brief (5–6 April) and prepare a report for delivery at the 22 April meeting as agreed.
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Role of the Chair / Facilitator

- What does a good chair do?
Facilitating Meetings: Case Study

• Read the case study
• Pair up
• Put yourself in the role of advice columnist; what advice would you give?
Meeting Management

Facilitation Case Study

Taken from askamanager.com:

http://www.askamanager.org/2013/07/a-coworker-wants-to-push-a-bad-idea-at-a-meeting-i-lead.html

I’m really stumped on what seems like a fairly typical leadership scenario, but for whatever reason I can’t think of the best course of action.

I lead a monthly meeting of about 30 of my peers where we discuss pain points about our role and develop solutions, among other things. I was recently approached by a newer member who asked if she could share a solution (or what she kept calling a “new process” to “roll out”) with the group. I asked to hear more, and I see real issues with it—it doesn’t seem like she checked with her peers to understand the viability of this idea in different areas. She’s only about 4 months into the role, and I think she’s been encouraged by her manager to speak up more in this venue for brownie points.

For some validation, I checked with my mentor, the former leader of the forum (now promoted), to see what she thought and she really surprised me—she thinks it’s a great idea and that leadership will love it. It totally blindsided me—I can’t understand how she could think this is a viable/sustainable solution!

In any case, this convinced me that I want to set her idea before the group. I think it should probably be brought to a fair vote, and I decidedly will move forward with it if there’s enough support behind it. How can I ask this person to share their idea in a fair and neutral way while ensuring that my (valid) concerns are heard?

I realize this could be tough without knowing the nature of the idea, but I spent a lot of time thinking though the ramifications of this proposal and I worry my peers (who never speak up much) wouldn’t give it enough thought! Is this just a case of what will be, will be?
Decision Making in Meetings

Evidence → Interpretation → Decisions

6 Thinking Hats

- Information: What information does the team have? What do we need to know?
- Thinking about thinking: What thinking is needed? What are the options?
- Judging: What is the best choice? How do we make the decision?
- Feeling: How do we feel about the decision? What are our feelings?
- Creativity: What new ideas are possible? How can we improve?
- Benefits: What are the benefits of the decision? What might go wrong?
Special Case: Scrum-style Project Meetings

• Each team member reports on:
  – What has been done since last meeting
  – Any obstacles that have prevented progress
  – What each team member commits to do by the next meeting

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Role of the Secretary / Note Taker

– Having a separate note taker frees the facilitator to attend to his/her role
– Records progress and action items
– Summarizes and checks for consensus at the end.

Tracking Action Items

• Sample meeting notes template
• Save time for note taker to review at end, make sure everyone is clear and in agreement about next steps.
Meeting Management

Meeting Notes Template

MEETING NAME

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<td>Attending:</td>
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<td>Absent:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
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<td>Discussion summary</td>
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<td>Discussion summary</td>
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Special Case: Meeting Evaluation

- A helpful end to regular meetings, especially if the group has gotten stuck in the past.

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From Preparation to Action

Focus on What You Want

Instead of trying to suppress an unwanted behavior, focus on new, desired behaviors.
WOOP It Up

Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan

• Wish – What you hope will come from this session.
• Outcome – the best outcome you can imagine for your meetings
• Obstacle – what might get in the way?
• Plan – make a plan to make it happen
**Meeting Management**

**WOOP Action Planning Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wish – Your reason for coming to today’s session</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome – the best outcome you can imagine for your meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle – what might get in the way?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan – make a plan to make it happen</th>
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</table>
• Program evaluation link will be sent by email.
• You’ll get a link to a course page with all the materials.