

Effective Meetings

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**LEADERSHIP
ROUNDTABLE**
Service. Excellence. Church Management.



Workshop Agenda

In today's workshop, we will discuss how effectively run meetings can provide the structure and direction needed to support our ministries, including:

- Identify characteristics of an effective meeting
- Understand the importance of meeting planning and preparation, particularly creating a thoughtful and structured agenda
- Learn effective virtual and in-person meeting facilitation skills, including engagement strategies to invite participation



Workshop Objectives

Share
practical
ideas and
tools in:

Planning
and
Preparation

Effective
Facilitation

Meeting
Evaluation



Planning and Preparation

- Why meet? What is the purpose?
- What kind of meeting is this?
- Who should attend?
- When and where?
- What is the agenda?

Planning: Why Meet?



What is the **purpose of the meeting**?

- To solve a problem
- To make a decision
- To resolve a conflict
- To launch a project
- To engage in planning
- To generate ideas
- To share information
- To create community



Planning: Why Meet?

Is meeting the best way to achieve the purpose?

Alternatives to meeting?



Planning: What kind of meeting?

Daily Check In Meeting

- No more than 15 minutes
- Focus on near-term, administrative tasks
- No agenda

Weekly Staff Meeting

- 30 - 90 minutes
- Review of weekly activities
- Tactical issues

Specific Topic Meeting

- 1 - 4 hours
- Agenda on key initiatives

Strategic Planning Meeting

- ½ day – 2 days
- Agenda to support strategic planning / team building
- Quarterly or annually
- May be offsite



Planning: Participants

Who should have a voice at the table?

Do the participants know each other?



What will each person contribute to the discussion?

Why keep the meeting attendance small?



Planning: Meeting Time



When is the best time to have a meeting that requires high energy and a high level of participation, such as active brainstorming?



Planning: Meeting Location

- Projector / screen?
- Whiteboard / flip charts?
- Microphones / speakers?
- Conference or Zoom call?
- Outside guests? Signage needed?
- Space needs (e.g. small groups)?
- Seating arrangements?
- Food and beverages?
- Materials (e.g. note pads, pens, nametags)?
- Offsite?





Planning: Meeting Agenda



Meeting agenda **best practices**:

- Answer planning questions
- Next important to create agenda
- First, identify the goals of the meeting
- Then develop the agenda topics
- Be realistic about what can include
- Send agenda to participants in advance

Pairs Discussion



What is a suggestion on this **Agenda Template** that you may be interested in trying, and why?

Role of the Facilitator

- Values all voices
- Invested in the group achieving the desired outcomes
- Asks insightful questions
- Reflects back to the group what is happening
- Help the group see why different perspectives and opposing voices are critical to the outcome



Effective Facilitation

- Create well-planned agenda
- Select person record the minutes (notes)
- Arrive early to be sure room is ready
- Start meeting on-time
- Welcome participants individually
- Summarize discussion, decisions made
- Confirm next steps and clearly assign follow up tasks





Engagement Strategies to Invite Participation



- Journaling
- Passing technique offering an invitation to share but allows participants to decline
- Storytelling
- Breakout groups
- Reflect/pair/share – pose the prompt, invite participants to reflect individually in writing, find a partner and share
- Role playing



Effective Facilitation Strategies

How to facilitate productive

brainstorming:

- Ask someone to share an idea and pass
- Write a list of all ideas where all can see
- Keep going around until all ideas shared
- No judgment until all ideas shared





Effective Facilitation Strategies



How do we encourage **introverts** to participate?

“_____, we’d be interested in your thoughts” ...

“Has everyone had a chance to share their thoughts with us today?” ...

How do we encourage **extroverts** to provide space for others to participate?

“_____, thank you for your contribution. Your thoughts on _____ are helpful. I want to be sure we have the chance to hear from everyone today. Would someone else like to share?” ...



Effective Facilitation Strategies

How to avoid getting **off-track**

- Topics raised not on the agenda

“I appreciate this is something you think we should discuss but this isn’t the purpose of today’s meeting. I would be happy to put on a future agenda” ...

OR

“Let’s you and I have a separate discussion on that topic, I’ll reach out to you after today’s meeting to schedule” ...





Effective Facilitation Strategies



How to avoid getting ***off-track***

- Exceeding time allocated for a topic

“It is clear that we didn’t give this topic enough time ... we’ll add to next week’s agenda”

OR

“... we’ll schedule a separate meeting to discuss this specifically” ...

- Interpreting silence – *can mean many things*

Importance of Questions

- To encourage ideas
 - In your experience ...*
 - What else? ...*
 - What does someone else see? ...*
- To clarify
 - Can you tell me more ...*
- To confirm
 - It sounds like what you are saying is ..., is that right?*
 - Is the reason that is important because ...*





Importance of Questions



- To create possibilities
How does this contribute to
What might this mean if we are successful? ...
- To give voice to alternatives
Would someone like to speak to an option that is not being considered?



Effective Facilitation Strategies



If purpose of the meeting is to make a **decision**, it is important to share how the decision will be made.



Differences of Opinion

Can be tempting to want to limit differences of opinion and opposing voices

- Can be a voice for something that is missing and needed in the conversation
- Often said with a great deal of courage
- If do not have opportunity to be heard now, will likely show up in other ways that can impact the team's effectiveness
- Help participants explore the viewpoint through curiosity

“Who sees the issue the same way?” ... “Who sees it differently?” ...



Managing Confrontation

- Paraphrase to clarify assumptions behind the statement

“What I hear you saying is... is that correct?” ...

- Respond with curiosity

“This feels important to you. Why do you think it is important to our discussion today?” ...

- If the statement is in the form of a complaint, ask them to reframe in the form of a hope or aspiration

“What is it that you would hope to see as an outcome of today’s meeting?” ...



Pairs Discussion

I'd like you to turn to your neighbor and reflect on the facilitation strategies we've discussed today, answering these questions:

- *What facilitation strategy have you used before and how has it been helpful?*
- *What facilitation strategy are you interested in trying, and why?*
- *What other facilitation strategies have you used that have been effective that we haven't discussed today?*

Virtual Meetings

- Sign on at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting
- Open the call 5 minutes before start time
- Lighting is important
- Use camera and position correctly
- Find quiet space without distractions
- Keep unmuted so can more easily engage in dialogue
- Be more energetic than you would be in-person





Virtual Meetings

- Welcome each participant individually as they join the call
- Make sure names are shown
- Call on people – but let them know ahead of time; more likely to be engaged and focused
- Encourage use of chat to share
- Invite people to use “raise your hand” if like to share
- Keep list of who has spoken
- Consider individual breakout rooms for reflection
- Use breakout rooms for smaller group discussion
- Have someone serve in production role to assist with technical aspects



Meeting Evaluation

Following the meeting, it is important to **review and reflect**:

- Were the goals of the meeting met?
- Was there a clear summary and actionable next steps?
- Did participants receive the agenda and other materials in time?
- Did everyone come prepared for the discussion?
- Were the needed people for the topic included?
- Did everyone have the chance to participate?
- Were participant's contributions met with respect?
- Did anyone dominate the discussion? If so, how was this handled?
- Did the meeting start and finish on time?
- Did the meeting location and set up work for the purpose?
- Was the next meeting scheduled?



Summary

In summary, **characteristics of an effective meeting:**

- Meeting was thoughtfully planned
- All participants received the agenda and materials with adequate time to prepare
- All participants attended the meeting prepared
- The people that needed to be in the meeting were included
- The meeting started and ended on time
- The meeting facilitator was skilled at keeping the meeting on track, focusing on the agenda items, and ensuring everyone's voice was heard
- The meeting ended with clarity and commitment regarding the next steps



In Closing

I am committed to implement...





Contact

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