



Effective Meetings #1 The Cost of Ineffective Meetings

Many of us complain about time wasted in meetings. Making just a few changes in how meetings are planned and conducted could save your organization significant time and money, improve attendees' promptness and satisfaction, and create an atmosphere of productivity and consistent value given and received that will "trickle down" into all areas of your organization.

What Ineffective Meetings Cost:

A meeting can be formal or impromptu, in the board room or the hallway, in person or by remote methods, a conference call or a web event. We are defining a "meeting" as any real-time conversation between two or more people. Given this broad definition, many participants in our Effective Meetings Workshop estimated they spent 50% or more of each workday in meetings of one type or another. These same people considered half or more of their meeting time wasted, which equates to 25% of each workday (and each paycheck) wasted due to ineffective meetings.

You have everything to gain by improving meeting effectiveness:

- Improved productivity and profitability.
- Better participation and morale.
- Building a model of meetings that is reproducible, that others can learn and use.
- Ideas will surface in an effective meeting that otherwise might not.
- More satisfaction for everyone.

Results others have produced using these ideas:

Executive Meeting: 14 senior executives spent 1-1/2 days each week in formal meetings. Interviews revealed that almost everyone felt the meetings were inefficient, ineffective, a waste of time. Now, they spend 3 hours each week in a decision-making meeting, and 2 hours in an optional topical-study meeting. Everyone agrees that the meetings are highly effective.

Sales Meeting: The sales staff dreaded the weekly sales meeting. The sales manager did all the talking and there was lots of information, a sprinkling of praise, and many exhortations to do better. After some training, they transformed the meetings into opportunities to practice and improve their sales skills. Even though attendance is optional, since the format was improved, rarely does anyone miss a meeting.



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Departmental Meeting: People required to attend a weekly departmental meeting invented ways to avoid coming, or managed to do other work during the meeting to stay awake during the endless round of individual status reports. After coaching, the manager realized that a monthly meeting, at an informal location, where the focus was on getting to know each other, would be much more valuable. Now, people look forward to attending and contributing at the meeting.

Putting This Article into Action

Read the articles in this Effective Meetings series for tips on how to achieve results like these.

Summary

On average, people think that over 25% of the workday is wasted just due to ineffective meetings. Making just a few changes in how meetings are planned and conducted could save your organization significant time and money, improve attendees' promptness and satisfaction, and create an atmosphere of productivity and consistent value given and received that will "trickle down" into all areas of your organization.

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