

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

MARCH 2020



WHY DO WE HOLD MEETINGS?



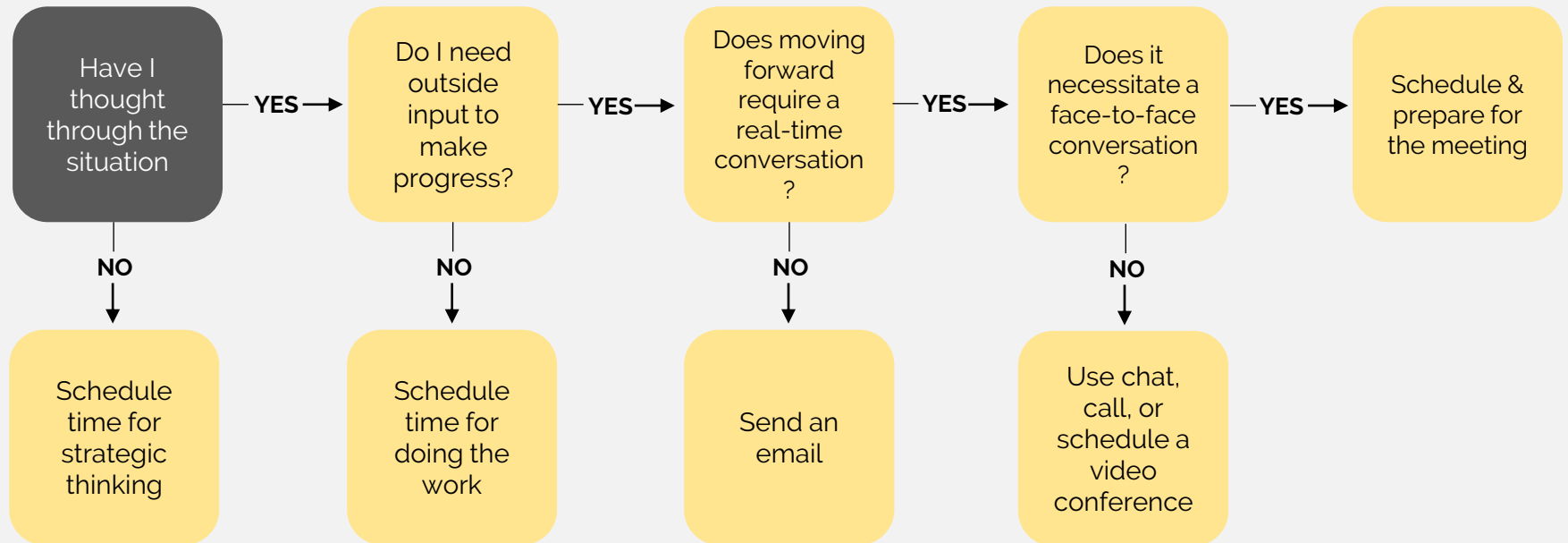
- Review performance
- Plan activities
- Make decisions
- Communicate
- Brainstorm ideas
- Problem solving
- Resolve conflict
- Deliver training
- Team development

Once we know why we hold meetings - do we really need one..?



SHOULD I HOLD A MEETING?

Scheduling a meeting can be the right solution but is not always the best answer. The decision tree below helps to determine if it makes sense



MEETINGS- DEBRIEF

Examples

- Arrives late
- No agenda
- It's just 'the weekly meeting'

- Does not invite the right people
- Does not explain the meeting purpose
- Does not bring the right information

- Does not budget agenda time
- Focuses on urgent vs. important issues
- Does not sequence agenda items

- Everyone talks at once
- Individuals dominate discussion
- 'Red Herrings' and irrelevancies

- Nobody remembers previous decisions
- Actions not clearly assigned and responsibilities inconclusive

Lesson

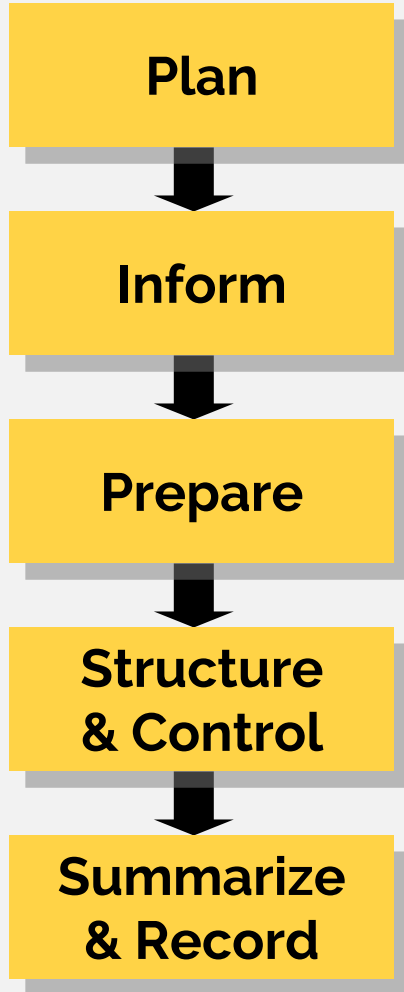
- Decide whether a meeting is needed
- Think through the meeting objectives

- Decide who should attend and invite them
- Advise invitees of meeting purpose
- Obtain all information prior to meeting

- Allot the correct time to each agenda item
- Distinguish between important & urgent
- Prepare the agenda in a logical sequence

- Structure the discussion (evidence before interpretation and decisions)
- Control the discussion

- Summarize and record decisions and action points



HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD YOU SPEND ...

40%

Preparation

- Preparing agenda
- Preparing information
- Coaching chairperson
- Pre-presenting

20%

Execution

- Meeting Management
- Facilitation
- Preparing Action Log

40%

Follow-Up

- Evaluate the meeting
- Follow-up actions
- Completion own actions





BEFORE THE MEETING

- Preparing agenda
- Preparing information
- Coaching chairperson
- Pre-presenting

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE THE MEETING

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- What are the desired outcomes?
- Is a meeting really necessary?
- What alternatives exist to meeting?
- Who should attend the meeting?
- What is the chemistry of the attendees?
- What is the meeting plan?
- What unexpected issues might arise?



TERMS OF REFERENCES

Describes all of the important aspects for the meeting so that every participant and those outside of the meeting are very clear on the purpose and operation on the meeting

Example Template

Frequency: Date: Time: Venue:	ATTENDEES: Chair: Attendees:
OBJECTIVES:	AGENDA:
INPUTS:	OUTPUTS:
	GROUND RULES:



MEETING AGENDA

A well designed agenda increases the teams ability to effectively and quickly address problems

Example Meeting Agenda Template

Topic	Preparation	Proposed Outcome
Topic 1. Time: Min Purpose: Decision		
Topic 2. Time: Min Purpose: Decision		
Topic 3. Time: Min Purpose: Decision		

AGENDA TIPS

- **Seek input from team members** get them engaged in the meeting preparation process
- **List agenda topics as questions** allows for team members to better prepare for the discussions that will occur within the meeting
- **Suggest processes for addressing the agenda items**
- **Propose realistic amounts of time for addressing each agenda item**



PRE-PRESENT KEY ATTENDEES

- Ensure buy-in and understanding
- Surface potential issues or concerns
- Neutralize difficult attendees
- Agree meeting outputs and actions

Eliminate Surprises!



A photograph of a meeting in progress, showing the silhouettes of several people sitting around a table. The scene is backlit by a bright window, creating a strong glow and highlighting the outlines of the participants. The image is framed by a yellow hexagonal pattern.

DURING THE MEETING

- Meeting Management
- Facilitation
- Preparing Action Log

MEETING MANAGEMENT

MEETING LEADER CHECKLIST

- **Start on time**
Latecomers will soon learn to arrive on time
- **Review the meeting agenda**
Clarify the meeting objectives and expected outputs
- **Appoint roles**
Assign someone other than yourself as scribe
- **Agree ground rules**
Brainstorm / recap the agreed ground rules
- **Steer the conversation**
Clarify; Summarize; Confront bad behavior and process conflict
- **Review and summarize the actions**
Recap all decisions and agreed actions
- **Evaluate the meeting**
Review the effectiveness of the meeting
- **Finish on Time**
Ask permission if you need to extend the meeting

PARKING LOT

The “parking lot” can be thought of as a document where items that are important, but not relevant to the issues that the meeting is addressing, are noted for later consideration.

APPOINT ROLES

- **Facilitator:** Objectively lead the meeting
- **Scribe:** Record actions and decisions – needs action log
- **Timekeeper:** Monitor time and focus team – needs copy of agenda
- **Observer:** Evaluate the meeting with a purpose – needs critique sheet

AGREE GROUND RULES

Examples

- Start & finish on time
- Everyone participates
- One person speaking at a time
- Challenge ideas, not individuals
- Park anything not related to the agenda
- Minimise jargon
- Set phones on silent
- Commit to team decisions
- Respect all team members
- One voice following the meeting



MEETING FACILITATION

Unite the Group

Control Aggression

- *Let off steam*
- *Don't take sides*
- *Bring in others*
- *Stick to the facts*

Focus the Group

Keep To The Point

- *Stay alert*
- *Keep a hand on wheel*
- *Test comprehension*
- *Paraphrase and check*

Mobilize the Group

Involve Everyone

- *Protect the weak*
- *Check round the group*
- *Record suggestions*
- *Build up ideas*



MEETING FACILITATION

PROCESSING CONFLICT

- **Acknowledge feeling** Get them into the open
- **Remain neutral** Respect people's right to have their own feelings is it ready for me to read or opinions
- **Seek first to understand, then to be understood** Model and expect this behavior
- **Process feelings** by sharing concerns; identifying areas of conflict and commonality; discussing ideas for resolving or bridging gaps; confronting the individual privately
- **Refocus the conversation** on original topic and goals
- **Process feelings** by sharing concerns; identifying areas of conflict and commonality; discussing ideas for resolving or bridging gaps; confronting the individual privately
- **Refocus the conversation** on original topic and goals

DEALING WITH BAD BEHAVIOUR

- **Late Arrivers** - Start on time and don't update
- **Side Conversations** - Stop, look at the offenders and ask if they would like to share their idea
- **Dominators** - Ask them to scribe; check ground rules; seek input from other team members
- **Quiet members** - Periodically draw on them without putting them on the spot
- **Rambling** - Stay focused on the agenda; Summarize their point and then move on or use the parking lot
- **Negativity** - Ask the group to comment; Check for agreement / disagreement



RECORD ALL ACTIONS

Project Name:		Team:	Project start date				
Project goal:			Project end date				
#	Status	Action	Actionholder	Start date	Target Date	Revised Target Date	Comment
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

Not started
WIP
Complete
Behind schedule

Responsibility: Limit to one person who is in the room, not 'everyone'
Due Date: The accountable person assigns the date





AFTER THE MEETING

- Evaluate meeting
- Follow-up actions
- Complete own actions

HOW TO ASSESS MEETING EFFECTIVENESS

- Were the meeting objectives achieved?
- Were all of the agenda items covered?
- Did everyone contribute to the meeting?
- Were all of the issues explored fully?
- Was consensus reached on the key issues?
- Were actions assigned with clear responsibilities and due dates?



CONTACT

Why Pollen Consulting Group? Being a fresh and new business, allows us to challenge the consultancy model, building a new level of competency. Pollen is driven to make a difference.

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