

Chapter 9: Conducting Meetings

Overview

Meetings happen in different environments for multiple reasons; therefore, it is important that each meeting accomplishes its goal(s). This chapter provides information about the different types of meetings and tips for success in each. Students will probably be able to apply the information from this chapter on the job almost immediately.

Lecture Notes

A. Types of Meetings

Traditionally, a meeting is defined as the interaction of two or more people in an actual physical location. However, advancements in technology allow ITV, Internet-based meetings, and other real-time, synchronous interaction from different locations.

1. **Formal Meetings** take a lot of time and money within a business environment, and their success has a direct impact on the organization's success. Technology has changed the format of some meetings.
 - a. Types of formal meetings may vary, but they are all planned in advance with the agenda distributed beforehand. In-house meetings might include general meetings (scheduled for everyone in the organization), departmental meetings (include a particular work group), or committee meetings (participants gather for specific purpose). Other meetings may include people outside the organization: board meetings (set regularly, include board of directors, etc.) and public meetings (include the public in a variety of formats).
2. A **Conference** is a special form of a formal meeting. It requires extra planning and setup related to location and preparations.
 - a. A conference is a formal meeting of people gathered for a specific purpose; it includes sessions of special interests, equipment displays, information, and vendors. People may come from a large area, and conferences can include LOTS of participants.
 - b. Types include company-sponsored, business associations, professional associations, and community associations. They all have decisions to be made regarding location, leadership, participation, and activities.
3. **Informal Meetings** can occur anywhere and at any time; many begin during employee break times or when they bump into one another. Sometimes an informal meeting is planned—a work team gathering to discuss project progress.
 - a. Types of informal meetings can vary, but they usually involve a discussion of issues and maybe a decision to act based on consensus. Types may include impromptu meetings, committee meetings, office meetings, and lunch/dinner meetings.
 - b. Actions of informal meetings can occur efficiently and include things like sharing ideas, resolving issues, identifying problems, facilitating contributions, and promises of follow-up.

B. The Purpose of Meetings

1. **Information Meetings** are used to present information to a group that has a common interest
 - a. Types of information shared may include conveying reports and explaining procedures.
 - b. Information meetings may be formal or informal.
2. **Evaluation or Performance Review** between a manager and subordinate to discuss evaluation and job performance.
 - a. An office meeting is almost always used for an evaluation or performance review.
 - b. This is an informal meeting, but that does NOT mean unimportant.
3. Problem-solving or **Decision Making Meetings** are used to involve more people in the process.
 - a. Formal, organized processes may be used for discussing and resolving issues.
 - b. Informal processes use group meetings to explore ideas in an informal setting; the recommendations may be considered formal.
4. **Inspirational Meetings** are used to motivate employees to be loyal to the firm.
 - a. Regular inspirational meetings may be held on a set schedule; they may sound like pep rallies. (*Ask students for any examples; WalMart uses them.*)
 - b. *Occasional inspirational meetings* are informal and impromptu. Because they appear more authentic, they may be more effective.
5. **Reorganization Meetings** may be necessary when the organizational structure of the firm is changing.
 - a. Types of reorganization that might make use of the meetings include mergers, dissolution, or rearrangements.
 - b. Everyone dreads this type of meeting.
 - c. Information is power—the more informed they are, the more cooperative they will be.
 - d. Informal and formal meetings may be necessary to be sure employee concerns are addressed.
6. **Educational Meetings** assist employees with new information or processes; they may be conducted by inside trainers or outside consultants.
7. **Brainstorming Meetings** can generate ideas related to problem-solving; meetings are used in conjunction with problem-solving.

C. Conducting Meetings

Administrative professionals are often asked to lead and conduct meetings, so this entire chapter is especially important.

1. **Arranging and Planning Meetings** requires consideration of many factors.

- a. Costs may be pretty high relative to meetings; they may be connected to materials and equipment, space utilization, outside speakers, transportation, and time used in the process of planning.
 - b. Planning is necessary to ensure the meeting is effective. The planner must take into account the WHY, WHO, WHEN, WHERE, and the HOW of the meeting.
 - c. Scheduling the meeting takes coordination of individual schedules to avoid conflicts; the farther ahead things are planned, the less chance of conflict.
 - d. Presentation of issues takes time and should include questions from the participants. It is important that everyone walks away understanding the issues and information.
2. **Leading and Chairing Meetings** is a critical role of the manager; it involves leading the meeting and keeping it on track, on time, and efficient.
- a. Techniques for managing informal meetings include beginning the meeting and report decisions; the chair should also be sure everyone participates and deal with negative situations as they arise.
 - b. Certain techniques make formal meetings more effective: using an agenda or plan, promptness and sticking to the schedule, use of parliamentary procedure, and a meeting summary.
 - c. Parliamentary procedure uses a system like Robert's Rules of Order to outline the procedures used in the meeting. Some elements include
 - A parliamentarian is appointed
 - An orderly example of fairness and courtesy
 - One item is discussed at a time
 - Everyone has a right to speak for allotted time
 - Actions result from motions (*types outlined in text*)
 - Includes reports from committees and officers
 - d. Chairing a meeting means you are in charge during a meeting. That includes the authority to manage the meeting, enforce the rules, keep order, and direct others to perform roles. The role of chair is an important role for success of the meeting; therefore, care should be taken to select a chair with appropriate characteristics and able to take expected actions.
 - e. Responsibilities of the chair include things that relate to the members, content, and flow of the meeting.
 - f. Controlling the meeting progress is the primary duty of the chair; he/she is responsible for keeping the meeting on track, observing participant reactions, focusing the discussion, and reaching conclusions.
3. **Problems with Meetings** arise because of conflict; however, the conflict can lead to positive effects.
- a. Group conflict may be related to topic, interpersonal issues, or a combination of the two.
 - b. Problems in meetings may result from unprepared participants, sabotage, direct challenge, or breakdown of control.

- c. Resolution of conflict should follow basic steps: find all of the facts, isolate factors related to the conflict, and defuse the causes.

Additional Resources for Students

Recommended readings (no texts should be more than two years old):

- Bittel, Lester R. and John W. Newstrom. *What Every Supervisor Should Know*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Carrell, Michael R. *Human Resources Management*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Davis, Fruehling, and Oldham. *Psychology: Human Relations and Work Adjustment*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- DeCenzo, David A. and Stephen P. Robbins. *Human Resource Management*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Dessler, Gary. *Human Resource Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- DuBrin, Andrew. *Human Relations: A Job Oriented Approach*. Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Gomez-Mejia, Luis, David Balkin, and Robert Cardy. *Management Human Resources*.
- Haimann and Hilgert. *Supervision*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Harris, Michael. *Human Resource Management*.
- Ivancevich, John M. *Human Resource Management*. Irwin/McGraw Hill.
- Milkovich, George T. and John W. Boudreau. *Human Resources Management*.
- Mondy, Noe and Premeaux. *Human Resource Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- Sherman, Arthur W. Jr. and George W. Bohlander. *Managing Human Resources*. South-Western Publishing Co.

Current issues of periodicals or business publications are also an excellent resource. Some of the following periodicals have an accompanying Web site.

<i>Current Periodical</i>	<i>Web Address</i>
<i>BusinessWeek</i>	http://www.businessweek.com
<i>Fortune</i>	http://www.fortune.com
<i>IAAP Complete Office Handbook</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/products/handbook.htm
<i>Modern Office Technology</i>	
<i>OfficePro</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/officepro/toc.htm
<i>The Office</i>	