

BASIC FACILITATION



**Missouri Department of
Health and Senior Services**

August 2005

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS

Meetings are essential for carrying out the organization's business. All too often meetings are not well planned and the participants wonder why the meeting was held. To prevent this from happening it is imperative that the leader plans, conducts and evaluates meetings to insure that all meetings held accomplish the stated purpose. Meetings should not take place just to take place.

Objectives: After completing this module you will be able to:

- Develop a meeting agenda
- Identify meeting roles
- Evaluate a meeting
- Describe how to conduct an effective meeting

Meeting Process

The meeting process can be broken into the following steps:

1. Purpose
2. Planning
3. Conducting – Feedback needed
4. Follow-up
5. Outcome

Planning the Meeting

The most important question is what is the purpose of the meeting. All participants should understand why the meeting is being held and work toward that purpose. Often the participants will ask after the meeting is completed, "why did we have this meeting"? To avoid this problem the leader, with input from team members should develop an effective agenda. The agenda should include the following:

- Meeting purpose(s)
- When the meeting will start and end
- A list of all topics to be presented
- Who will present the item
- Time for each item
- The meeting process that will be used

The agenda should also include a process check and a meeting effectiveness survey. The value of conducting a process check during the course of a meeting should never be underestimated. The purpose of a process check is to ascertain how the team is

progressing toward achieving the purpose of the meeting and to determine if the team members are clear about the intended outcome of the meeting.

A process check can prevent a failed meeting, thus minimizing the chances that team members will leave engaged in unhealthy conflict and confused about purpose and desired outcome or product. A process check can be done using a formal printed instrument or the facilitator may choose to simply "poll" the team members at an opportune moment during the course of the meeting, if it appears that the agenda is in trouble.

Whether formal or spontaneous, a process check should focus on four components of the agenda:

- Progress: On track according to the agenda?
- Pace: Too fast or too slow?
- Process: Appropriate tools/methods?
- Pulse: Frustrated; tired; satisfied; pleased; energized?

The worksheet on the following page can be used to effectively plan a meeting.

Developing Rules

Meetings are more effective if meeting rules are developed and followed. Rules assist in reducing confusion, misunderstanding and conflict. It is important to have the team develop the rules and agree to their use throughout the meeting.

How to develop rules:

The team decides on their meeting rules in a spirit of cooperation. Because the rules are subject to change or addition, it is not necessary to establish all the rules at one time. As the team works together, unanticipated issues or situations arise. These situations are opportunities for the team to review, revise and develop rules as needed, and it is important to do so.

Steps in developing meeting rules:

- Brainstorm problems that arise during meetings.
- Develop a rule to reduce or prevent each of the listed problems that have occurred during past meetings.
- Discuss the rules
- Select the rules the team feels are the most important
- Selected rules are then posted at every meeting and observed during the meeting. Team members can sign the bottom of the rule sheet to show their support for the rules.

WORKSHEET FOR AGENDA PLANNING

Purpose of Meeting: _____

Team Leader: _____ Meeting Begins: _____

Facilitator: _____ Meeting Ends: _____

Recorder: _____

Agenda Items	Who	Purpose & Time Info. - Decision - Planning	Start Time on Agenda

TEAM MEETING ROLES

There are roles that must be filled in order for your team to operate successfully during a team meeting. The team leader may do all or most of these during the first several meetings. However, other team members should gradually assume these roles on a rotation basis as the team begins to get organized. The possible roles and the description of each are described below.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
Team Leader (Required Role)	Guides the team in preparing for and holding effective meetings. Makes sure the team members have the opportunity to be fully involved and informed. Helps the team to stay customer-focused and to get work done effectively. Sets an example for how to participate as a productive team member at meetings.
Meeting Facilitator (Required Role)	Move the team toward its identified purpose(s) using team tools and is in charge of process for all or part of the meeting. Team members who are trained can take turns performing this role. An outside facilitator may be used on high-stake or complex team issues.
Recorder (of minutes) (Required Role)	Is responsible for permanent team record keeping. Takes notes on a tablet or laptop or can collect flip-chart sheets to prepare permanent minutes.
Recorder (on flip-chart) (Not always needed)	Records team information on flip-chart sheets during the meeting. Has the ability to write quickly and legibly.
Time Keeper (Not always needed)	Reminds the team how they are doing meeting their set agenda schedule.
Logistics Manager (Not always needed)	Makes sure that all needed arrangements are accomplished for meeting space, equipment, and supplies.
Gate Keeper (Not always needed)	Monitors open and equal team member participation during the meeting. Encourages silent members to participate in team discussion.

Evaluating The Meeting

Evaluating team meetings is essential to improving the effectiveness of meetings. It is difficult, if not impossible to improve meetings if all members are not focused on what must be corrected in order to improve future meetings. To accomplish this, team members should be asked to evaluate each team meeting using the meeting evaluation sheet on the following page.

Meeting Exercise

Developing a good meeting agenda is critical to the success of the meeting. To assist in developing future agendas and evaluating meetings do the following actions listed below.

Break into groups and:

- Develop a sample agenda for a future staff meeting using the Worksheet for Agenda Planning. Complete as much of the sheet as possible and make the information as realistic as possible.
- Evaluate your last team meeting using the Meeting Evaluation Sheet.
- Discuss the results in your group.

MEETING EVALUATION SHEET

Questions	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
Was the meeting purpose clear?				
Did the meeting start and end on time?				
Was the facilitation effective?				
Was the recording effective?				
Did all participate as needed?				
Was meeting purpose met?				
Was there a good mix of –Information Exchange, Decision Making and Planning?				

What portion of the meeting was the most beneficial?
What portion was the least beneficial?
What should be done to improve future meetings?

The Key To Conducting An Effective Meeting:

A facilitative leader's most important function during the course of a meeting is to help the team members make high-quality decisions that lead to problem solutions and process improvement. Achieving this function is no easy task, to be sure. Making high-quality decisions involves choosing the most appropriate method of making decisions and then guiding the team members to a good decision using that method.

Poor decisions are characterized by:

- Aimless drifting and random discussions
- Voting on important items, while seeking consensus on trivial matters
- Running out of time before important decisions are reached
- Pervasive and non-productive arguing
- Lack of clarity about the purpose, decision to be made and individual interpretation about the relevant issues
- The agenda is abandoned

During the course of a meeting the facilitative leader must monitor and motivate to ensure that the team members are have the maximum opportunity to arrive at thoughtful decisions and logical solutions to real problems. The degree of member interaction is critical to the success of the meeting and the facilitative leader needs to be attuned to the meeting "flow" to ensure that the meeting is successful by:

- Monitoring overall participation
- Encouraging participation by all team members
- Encouraging support for each other among team members
- Encouraging diversity of opinion to enhance and expand dialogue
- Minimize unhealthy conflict and monitor healthy conflict
- Encourage open dialogue, reflective listening, and positive feedback

Facilitative leaders must develop skill at identifying meeting dynamics and understanding the positive and negative influence meeting dynamics can have on meeting outcomes. These dynamics can challenge the success of a meeting if not carefully monitored:

- Participation vs. influence
- Silence vs. agreement
- Tentativeness/tidiness vs. assertiveness/aggressiveness
- Intent vs. effect
- Conflict vs. peace

Success in managing challenging meeting dynamics comes in large measure from giving adequate attention to the content and structure of the meeting. The facilitative leader must be mindful of the meeting's subject, issues, problems, analysis, recommendations, and supporting data to guide decision-making. It is very important for the facilitative leader to remain neutral on content while:

- Initiating action
- Keeping focus on topic and agenda
- Eliciting information
- Summarizing
- Leading the development of action plans
- Comparing and contrasting viewpoints

The facilitative leader plays a pivotal role in how structure addresses the meeting agenda. The facilitative leader must be mindful about how the discussions will transpire, what decision tools will be used, and how the meeting is organized. The facilitative leader must assume responsibility for:

- Leading the development of the agenda
- Managing time
- Clarifying goals, objectives, and outcomes
- Ensuring that the tasks get accomplished
- Developing ground rules
- Identifying processes for decision-making, problem solving, and data analysis
- Overseeing and coordinating action planning

Finally, the facilitative leader must not forget that facilitating is at its most effectiveness a consensual activity.

Workplace Trends

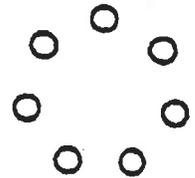
Taking into account current workplace trends, it appears that facilitative leadership in a team-based work environment offers the greater security when it comes to predicting an organization's future viability. Recent workplace studies indicate that workers want to be a part of decision-making and that they value being part of well-organized, efficient teams. A survey of such research literature reveals that workers:

- Want to make a difference and improve the status quo because they believe improvement will determine the organization's future and their own, as well
- Are very interested in developing themselves, their workplace skills, and their professional involvement
- Believe that involvement in process improvement increases job security and organizational success.

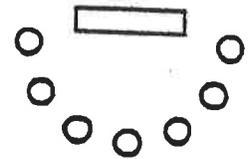
FIVE WAYS TO ARRANGE A ROOM

Assuming that your team consists of no more than eight people, there are several choices for setting up the room for optimal communications.

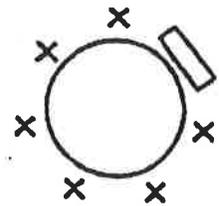
Circle: For an informal atmosphere, arrange the chairs in a circle with no tables.



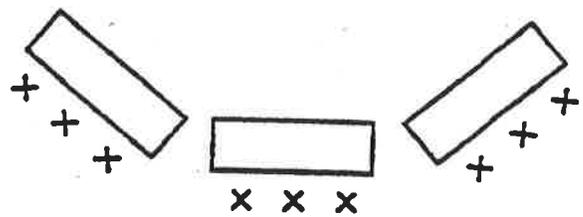
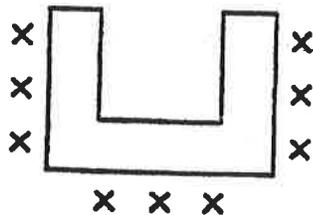
Semicircle: Place a flipchart on an easel in the open end of the circle.



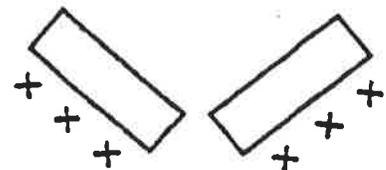
Round Table: If there will be a lot of writing, use a large round table. It is more difficult to use either a whiteboard or flipchart unless a space is left open at the table for you and this equipment.



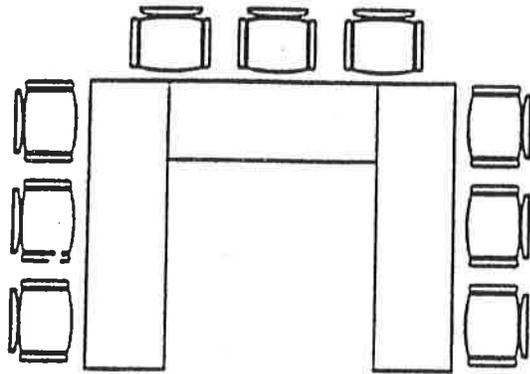
U-Shape: Form tables in a U-shape with chairs only on the outside. The open part of the U is for a flipchart. This formation allows for writing, but people will have to crane their necks to see the others in their own row of chairs.



Herringbone: Arrange two sets of tables in a herringbone shape with chairs on the outside only. The facilitator and any equipment can face these two tables. This shape allows good eye contact among everyone.

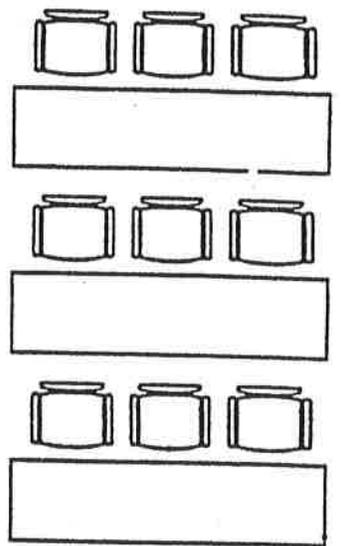


Use This

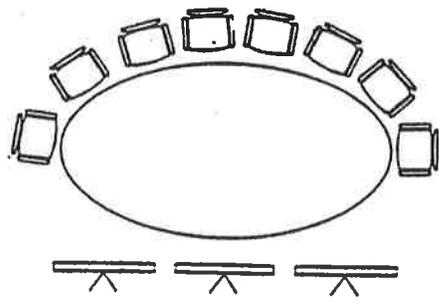


Flip Chart

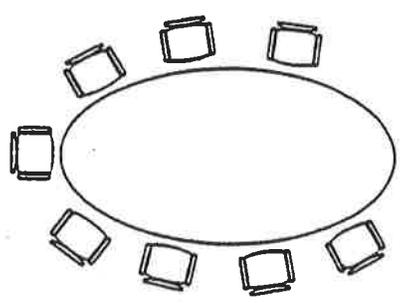
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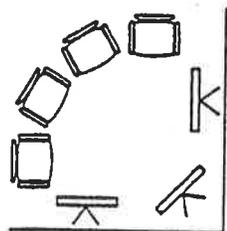
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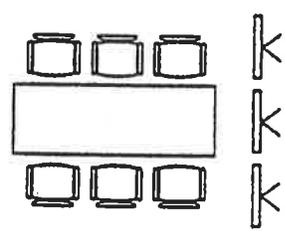
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USING FLIPCHARTS, EASELS AND MARKING PENS

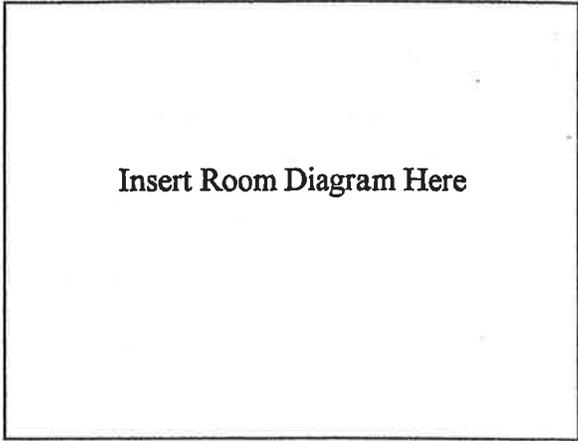
- Position the flipchart so that everyone can see it. Walk to different parts of the room to check for readability. Make sure the easel's legs are firmly positioned.
 - Stand at an angle to the easel as you write and then stand to the side while listening to the next speaker.
 - Use paper that has faint lines on it so you can write straighter.
 - Write in large block letters at least 1 1/2 inches high.
 - Leave about two inches or more between lines.
 - Use several colored magic markers. For fun, use scented markers.
 - Use as few words as possible.
 - Abbreviate words and use symbols but make sure the group understands them.
 - Highlight key words with
 - ✓ circles
 - ✓ boxes
 - ✓ underlining
 - ✓ arrows
 - ✓ pictures
 - ✓ contrasting color
 - If you aren't sure how to spell a word and you feel everyone's eyes on your back, perhaps joke about it or ask for help.
 - Write a maximum of 10 lines per sheet of paper.
 - Fill up only the top two-thirds of the sheet.
 - As a sheet is full, tear it off and post it on a wall. Ask someone else to help you with this task.
-

IF...	THEN...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are recording the group's input, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record key words quickly. Check with contributors to be sure you are reflecting their ideas accurately.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You wish to have them compare and contrast data, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use two flipcharts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want to display information for a period of time, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hang pages on the wall with masking tape.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't have an easel, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post large pieces of paper on a wall but put blank pieces behind them to avoid the ink bleeding through.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want to prerecord information, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave a blank page between sheets to avoid bleed-through and distraction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want to look especially professional in front of the group, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightly write memory joggers in pencil in margin of flipchart page. Practice tearing pages cleanly before trying it in front of the group. Cover flipchart information when not in use.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES – SAMPLE PLANNING LIST

- _____ Course/Workshop Books
- _____ Handouts
- _____ Computer and Printer
- _____ Easel, Pad
- _____ Extension Cord
- _____ Facility Diagram and Local Area Info
- _____ Folders, (NSN: 7530002910098)
- _____ Hole Punch, 3-Hole
- _____ Index Cards, 3 x 5
- _____ Markers, Mr. Sketch
- _____ Masking Tape
- _____ Microphone and Amplifier
- _____ Name Cards (Desk Type)
- _____ Notebook Paper
- _____ Pencils
- _____ Pens
- _____ Podium
- _____ Post-It Notes, ___ 3x5, ___ 1.5 x 2
- _____ Projector, Overhead
- _____ Projector, 35 mm Slide
- _____ Screen



- _____ Stapler
- _____ Television, Color
(19" or larger)
- _____ Video Camcorder w/tripod
- _____ Video Tape, Blank, 120 min
- Other: _____
- _____
- _____

MANAGING MEETINGS

The business meeting continues to gain importance in today's organization. As more organizations exist for the sole purpose of processing information, more meetings are being held to discuss and to disseminate that information. Furthermore, the "real business" of an organization often is conducted within a meeting. Statistics show that typical managers spend approximately one quarter of their work days in meetings—meetings that often are dull, uninspiring, boring, or even without purpose.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Nicoll (1981) identifies eight types of meetings, each having a different purpose. It is important for everyone involved in a meeting to understand what kind of meeting he or she is in.

1. *Informational meetings* are held to disseminate data, facts, decisions, and policies that have been made at higher levels in the organization. Informational meetings are of three subtypes: (a) *from supervisor to subordinate*, in which the former conveys information; (b) *from subordinates to supervisor*, in which subordinates convey information; and (c) *interactional*, in which information is shared.
2. *Validational meetings* are held to announce decisions made by higher management and to gain commitment to implementing the decisions.
3. *Planning or strategizing meetings* are held in order for the participants to create long-range action plans for themselves. The outcome usually is a vision or mission and some sort of to-do list.
4. *Problem-solving and decision-making meetings* are similar to planning and strategizing meetings except that the plans made are for the short term. The focus is on day-to-day business rather than on long-range planning.
5. *Staff conferences* are held to ensure the progress of action plans generated in planning and problem-solving meetings. Progress reports are provided, the expression of opinions is solicited, and individual actions are coordinated.
6. *Feedback and evaluation meetings* are held to assess the progress of goals set in previous planning or problem-solving meetings. The focus is on organizational or personal performance.
7. *Training meetings* are held to educate. The training typically focuses on behavior, skills, or knowledge that will allow people to perform their duties more easily and effectively.
8. *Celebrative meetings*, which usually are social get-togethers rather than structured proceedings, allow participants to relax and to take pride in their accomplishments.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Meetings	Frequency	Products Produced	Satisfaction	Participation	Value
Information					
Validation					
Planning/Strategizing					
Staff/Conference					
Problem Solving Decision Making					
Feedback/Evaluation					
Training					
Celebrative					

Frequency: High-Medium-Low-Never

Products Produced: High-Medium-Low-Never

Satisfaction: High-Medium-Low-None

Participation: High-Medium-Low-None

Value: High-Medium-Low-None

MEETINGS OBJECTIVES

- * After Completing this Module You Will be Able to:
- * Develop a Meeting Agenda
- * Identify Meeting Roles
- * Evaluate a Meeting
- * Describe How to Conduct an Effective Meeting

MEETING PROCESS STEPS

1. Purpose
2. Planning
3. Conducting – feedback necessary
4. Follow-up
5. Outcome(s)

PLANNING - MEETING AGENDA

- * Should Include:
- * Meeting Purpose
- * Meeting Time - Beginning and End
- * List of All Topics
- * Who Will Present Topics
- * Time for Each Topic
- * Meeting Process to be Used



NEED FOR A MEETING

- *What Are the Desired Conclusions and Why are They Important?
- *What Work Products Must/Should be Produced?
- *What Decisions need to be Made and what Issues Need to be Addressed?



MEETING DETAILS

- *Why and IF the meeting is needed
- *What outcomes are desired
- *Who should attend
- *What arrangements need to be made
- *What agenda items need to be included
- *How will the agenda items be discussed
- *Time required to achieve desired outcomes



MEETING PROCESS CHECK

- *Progress: On Track According to the Agenda
- *Pace: Too Fast or too Slow
- *Process: Appropriate tools/Methods
- *Pulse: Frustrated – Tired – Satisfied – Pleased - Energized

DEVELOPING RULES

- *Brainstorm Rules to Overcome Problems
- *Discuss Rules
- *Select the Most Important Rules
- *Post Selected Rules
- *Modify as Necessary

WORKSHEET FOR AGENDA PLANNING

- *Purpose *Meeting Begins
- *Team Leader *Meeting Ends
- *Facilitator
- *Recorder

WORKSHEET FOR AGENDA PLANNING

Agenda Items	Who	Purpose & time Info.-Decision-Plan	Start Time on Agenda



TEAM MEETING ROLES

- * Team Leader (required)
- * Facilitator (required)
- * Recorder Minutes (required)
- * Recorder Flip-Chart (optional)
- * Time Keeper (optional)
- * Gate Keeper (optional)
- * Page 14 for details



MEETING EVALUATION

Questions	Yes	Somewhat	No
Purpose Clear			
Start & End on Time			
Facilitation Effective			
Recording Effective			
All Participate			
Purpose(s) Met			
Good Mix- Info.- Decision-Plan			



MEETING EVALUATION

- * What Portion of the Meeting Most Beneficial? _____
- * What Portion Least Beneficial? _____
- * What should be Done to Improve Meetings? _____



**MEETING EXERCISE
(Break into Groups)**

- *Develop an Agenda for a Future Meeting Using the Agenda Worksheet
- *Evaluate Your Last Staff Meeting Using the Meeting Evaluation Sheet
- *Discuss the Results in Your Group



CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- * Avoid
 - *Aimless Drifting & Random Discussions
 - *Voting on Important Matters – While Seeking Consensus on Trivial Matters
 - *Running Out of Time Before Reaching Important Decisions



CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- *Avoid
 - *Non-productive Arguing
 - *Lack of Clarity About Purpose
 - *Agenda is Abandoned

CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- * What To Do
- * Monitor Overall Participation
- * Encourage Participation by All
- * Encourage Support for Each Other
- * Encourage Diverse Opinion
- * Minimize Unhealthy Conflict – Monitor Healthy Conflict
- * Encourage Dialogue-Listening-Feedback

FACILITATOR MUST BE NEUTRAL

- * When:
 - * Initiating Action
 - * Keeping Focus on Topic and Agenda
 - * Getting Information
 - * Leading the Development of Action Plans
 - * Comparing and Contrasting Viewpoints

FACILITATOR RESPONSIBLE FOR

- * Assisting in Developing the Agenda
- * Managing Time
- * Clarifying goals, objectives, and Outcomes
- * Ensuring that Tasks Get Done
- * Developing Ground Rules
- * Identifying Processes for decision-making- Problem Solving and Data analysis
- * Coordinating Action Planning



DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

- * Develop a goal
- * Develop an objective that must be completed to achieve the goal.
- * Use the action plan worksheet and complete the information to track action plan progress.



ACTION PLAN

Task/Activity	Colleague Responsible	Date	
		Start	End



WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Action	Person	Start Date	End Date	Completed Date	Group
Do PHBG Report	Joanne	4/20	5/10	5/7/04	Jody Henry
Promote WFD	Henry	4/1	10/20		WFD Team
See Page 31b	For details				
