The Ten Commandments of Effective Meetings

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10 Commandments of Effective Meetings

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Construct of a Meeting

For the purposes of this course, we have created a concept of a meeting in five phases as shown in the diagram below. In general, each phase described below:

Phase 1 – Pre-Meeting: There are two things that occur during phase one. First is realization and decision to hold a meeting. The second is to determine what type of meeting to hold.

Phase 2 – Planning: Once the decision to hold a meeting and the type of meeting to determined, in phase two, we design and deliver the agenda and set up the meeting space.

Phase 3 – Conducting: Phase three begins with the first participant's arrival for the meeting. During this phase, we welcome the participants, kick off the meeting, and engage in the work of the meeting.

Phase 4 – Closing: Phase four occurs at the end of the meeting and used to confirm the decisions and actions the group has made during the meeting.

Phase 5 – Follow-up: At the conclusion of the meeting, the results are gathered, documented, and is then distributed as a meeting report.

10 Commandments of Effective Meetings

We chose the metaphor of the Ten Commandments as the minimum direction for creating effective meetings. Therefore, the first thing we discuss under each commandment is what we consider to be the minimum level requirement. There are many other things that could be done to improve effectiveness of a meeting but we felt these ten things were the minimum requirements to which all meetings should adhere. Following this, we offer you suggestions for taking your meetings a step beyond the minimum toward world class excellence.

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Phase 1 - Pre-Meeting

Thou Shall Hold Only Necessary Meetings

Minimum: as a minimum there are two things that must be done around the decision to hold a meeting. The first is to determine if a meeting is necessary, the second is to determine the type of meeting you need to hold.

Hold a Meeting or Not

The first decision to be made is, "Is a meeting needed?" To answer this we must answer two other questions:
1. Does the purpose of the meeting actually concern three or more people?
2. Can one-on-one meetings take care of the issue faster and more effectively?

- If the answers to the questions above are yes and yes, respectively, then hold one-on-one meetings with participants to resolve issues.
- If the answers to the questions above are yes and no, respectively, then we must to determine the type of the meeting that is required and initiate the planning.
- If the answers to the questions above are no and no, respectively, forget the meeting, and go back to work.

Type of Meeting to Plan

Once we have determined that a meeting is necessary we must identify that type of meeting we need to hold. The type of meeting helps us to uncover for things:
- how much preparation is required for the agenda
- Model and activities used in agenda
- Time for advanced notice to participants
- Preparation for the meeting by participants

There are four types of business meetings. The focus of all four kinds of meetings should be action; either communicating the intention to take an action (Information Meeting), the results of actions taken, administering a plan of action (Routine Team Meeting), or deciding among alternative actions (Special Planning Meeting or Special Purpose Meeting).

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Information Meeting

This type of meeting, also known as a Pass-Down meeting, is a one-way information sharing meeting (possibly with attendee questions for clarification purposes). Some managers use this format for regular staff meetings although it is ineffective for staff management. It really only allows for everyone to hear the same info from the same source. The agenda for this meeting is simple and straight-forward, and requires a little preparation on the part of the meeting leader and participants.

Routine Team Meeting

This meeting type is concerned with the routine work of the project and usually has a standardized agenda. The type of work to be done determines the model and activities to be used for the agenda. However, it is planned in advance with significant notice to participants providing time to prepare for each topic.

Special Planning Meeting

This type of meeting is a cross between a Routine Team Meeting and a Special Purpose Meeting. The significant difference between these is usually the time allotted to the meeting. The agenda is very complex with a large number of activities and likely include several models in the planning. Preparation for the Special Planning Meeting usually takes months.

Special Purpose (Urgent Problem Solving or Decision Making)

This meeting is usually a short notice, unforeseen, decision or problem solving event. It is sometimes called a Stand-up Meeting. The agenda, which consists of one item, may or may not be pre-printed. In these rare cases, the agenda may be developed on the spot as a part of kick-off step of meeting. Notice to participants is usually less than 24 hours.

A Step Beyond:

In most cases "A Step Beyond" is about additional things that we can do to make your meetings more effective, more world-class. However, in this section, our greatest concern is with getting rid of unproductive or unnecessary meetings. One of the biggest wastes of human capital are ongoing staff or routine meetings.

Staff meetings are crucial vehicles for maintaining good communication in the office, but it is important to find the right balance between good communication and productive uses of time. If your staff meeting is not producing the type of results you need, then you must re-examine the need, or redesign the process used in conducting your staff meetings.

Cancel non-productive routine meetings: If you can no longer clearly state the reason for having a regular meeting, it's time to kill it. Over time the purpose are coming together change and the need for the routine meeting is no longer valid. So when the meeting has lost its reason for existence, be the first one to put an end to it.

Again, consistent with the changing need it is valid to reassess a **routine meeting** to determine if the periodicity of the meeting is still valid. For example, if you have daily staff meetings, how productive are they? Can they be held less frequently? Or, perhaps, can they be held standing up someplace and kept to just a few minutes?

Phase 2 - Planning

Thou Shall Plan an Agenda for All Meetings

Minimum: it is good efficient business practice to think hard about the purpose, nature and structure of a meeting before it takes place. These thoughts should be codified in the form of an agenda and circulated to all participants well in advance of the meeting. Time enough, at any rate, for the participants to prepare whatever they need to in the way of reports, plans, proposals, or the like. Far too often, people who call meetings, grossly underestimate the amount of preparation required of the participants.

Planning the Agenda: a basic agenda has five elements:

Define the purpose and/or objective: Every meeting must have a defined purpose or one or more objectives. The purpose or objective, state why you're coming together and what you will attempt to accomplish. The purpose or objective statement is written in an active voice that describes the action you're going to take as a group. For example,

To discuss options for addressing…

Make decision about …

Select appropriate actions to...

Identify the Participants: depending on the type of meeting determining who needs to be present and participate in it is answered by asking a few questions:

Who needs to be present to help make an informed decision?

Who needs to be present to provide expertise?

Who needs to be present to hear the information presented?

Set date, time, & location: Little effort is paid to this requirement. In many organizations the date and time depends on the availability of the meeting room. However, that is only one factor that needs to be considered.

Set the date: in selecting the date for the meeting you must consider how much time will be required for the participants to prepare for the meeting. Do they have to collect data? Do they have to prepare a report? How much time should you provide them to prepare.

Location: determining the location of the meeting is often left to what space is available to you. And for routine meeting that may not be an issue. However, not all meetings are created equal. Some meetings require more open space, or a different table set up because of the number of people involved or the type of work being done. Another factor that impacts the location might be where people are coming from. If the meeting

leader is in one location and the majority of the participants are in another city that might be more appropriate for the meeting later to get help from one of the participants in finding a location. Other things to consider include, the number of people, the type of work, and the duration of the meeting.

Time: This may not seem like a big issue, particularly for most local meetings. Just hold the meeting during routine business hours. Yet there are factors that we must consider in setting the time. First, for local meetings, consider alternate work schedules, who's coming in a later hour or leaving earlier. Second, for those meetings that are not necessarily local, in our global environment we must consider people who are quite distant, in other time zones, that may be required to attend a meeting.

Emergencies are a reality for most organizations and may necessitate meetings at odd times, but routine meetings should be scheduled at a time that is reasonably convenient for the participants.

Establish Agenda Items: Agenda items are a function of the purpose, objectives, output, and methodology used in the design. In short, they are the past to achieving your purpose. Agenda items are a breakdown of the method or model you are employing to accomplish the purpose. Since business meetings are all about action than a discussion, problem solving, or decision making method is an appropriate place to start the design for the purpose you hope to achieve. Having a method is important because it insures a complete approach to what you're trying to accomplish. Based on the methodology you choose there are three things you'll need to identify in creating the agenda. Each agenda item should include:
- Title of Item: this can be something as simple as a word out of the model.
- Approximate time to accomplish: timing for agenda is the hardest thing anyone has to do. If you think you can do something in 10 minutes, our advice is to double it.
- Opening Question for Item: the open question for an agenda item can take two forms: first, it can be the key question that needs to be answered for that section of the model, or second, it can be the first question that needs to be asked for this agenda item. Presenting the key question that must be answered is a valuable guide.

Basic Agenda Format: There is no one best format for an agenda. If there is a format that you like, we suggest using that as long as it contains, at least, the five items discussed above. However, if you don't have a favorite format we have included a "simple agenda format" below for you to use. A copy of this will also be found on the shared drive or CD.

Simple Agenda Format

(Group)				
Purpose:				
Location:		❑	(participants)	❑
Date:		❑		❑
Time:	Start:	❑		❑
	End:	❑		❑
Preparation Required:		❑		❑
		Meeting was called by:	(Sponsors Name, phone & e-mail)	

Time or Duration	Agenda Items & Questions

NOTE: Worksheets may be tailored to reflect your own style and preferences. See the DLCG FAC Model Worksheets for the entire set of worksheets.

A Step Beyond:
There are a number of things that can be done to step beyond the minimum into a world-class approach with planning for meetings. We'll share a couple of them here.

Agenda planning: planning for your agenda can be a tedious thing. Professional facilitators develop planning worksheets that they use on a routine basis to plan their meetings. We have added a "Basic Meeting Worksheet" that will help you in planning your meetings.

Get input: A routine meeting should never be just about what you want or need. Because you are not the only person attending the meeting, it is best to give the participants an opportunity to suggest topics for the meeting around the purpose the group has identified.

In addition to the minimum structure identified above, consider including things like:
- Presenter or discussion leader for each topic
- Background information for each topic
- Assigned items for participant preparation

On the previous page we provided a "simple agenda format" for you to use that provide space for this additional information. (See page 11)

Model Meeting Methods: We mentioned a model or methodology for different types of meetings in the text above. We suggest that you develop and use standard models or methods to inform your agenda. Having a model to reference for the design of the agenda is extremely helpful in developing your agenda. In the section below we have provided two models for you to use.
- ICE Problem Solving Model (See page 17)
- FEMA Discussion Model (See page 18)

Identify the desired results or outcomes: Results or outcome or different than the product or output of the meeting. An outcome is a result of holding the meeting, of how the meeting was held, or of the interactions of the meeting participants around the topic of discussion. An outcome is generated more by how the meeting is structured than it is by the agenda items.
    Improve the process flow…
    Get everyone working toward the same goals.
    Generate better understanding of…

Plan Engaging Meetings:
    Plan different types of activities (individual work, small group work, large group work)

    Plan the Roles and Responsibilities for Participants:
    Establish Roles & Responsibilities
    1. Participant
        Everyone is a participant and responsible to prepare for the meeting using the advanced agenda topics as a guide, and participate in the meeting to help generate success for the group.
    2. Leader
        The Leader is responsible for all aspects of the meeting. They usually set the purpose, objectives, and agenda.
    3. Facilitator

(Optional role) It is not anticipated that you will have a professional facilitator working your meetings. Therefore the role of the facilitator may fall to a team member. If someone fills the role of the facilitator they may also serve in the roles of the scribe, time keeper, and observer.

4. Scribe

This is the individual that keeps a visual record of the work done by the group. In most cases this record is kept on flip charts or even a projected image of some computer word processing software.

5. Time Keeper

The time keeper watches the work flow and keeps us on tract with the agenda. They may negotiate, with the participants and leader, changes in the timed agenda to keep the meeting on track to end at the agreed time.

6. Observer

Occasionally the role of the observer is used to see how well the group functions related to tasks and maintenance behaviors of the group. Meeting Process Observer Log (See page 35)

Invite a neutral facilitator to sensitive meetings.

Better Agenda Format (Expanded)

(Group)				
Purpose:				
Meeting Objectives: 1. 2. 3.				

Logistics		❏	(participants)	❏	
Date:		❏		❏	
Location:		❏		❏	
Time:	Start:	❏		❏	
	End:	❏		❏	
Attire:		❏		❏	
Bring:		❏		❏	
Preparation Required:		❏		❏	

Meeting was called by:	(Sponsors Name, phone & e-mail)
Facilitator:	(Facilitator's Name, phone & e-mail)

Time	Agenda Items	Process	Responsibility
	(Date)	*(Tool or Activity)*	*(Activity Leader)*
	Welcome Admin		
	Break		
	Lunch		
	Break		
	End of Day Wrap-up		
	(Date)	*(Tool or Activity)*	*(Activity Leader)*
	Start		
	Break		
	Lunch		
	Closing		

NOTE: Worksheets may be tailored to reflect your own style and preferences. See the DLCG FAC Model Worksheets for the entire set of worksheets.

Meeting Planning Form

☑	Items
☐	Event Date(s)
☐	Identify the purpose of the event
☐	Specific work to be done
☐	Identify Meeting Outputs (Reporting & Follow-up)
☐	Identify Desired Outcomes
☐	Identify Roles & Responsibilities: Liaison, champion, facilitator, co-facilitator, scribe, etc.
☐	Agenda Development Timeframe Agreement
☐	Background for the Meeting
☐	Participant Notification Letter/E-mail
☐	Identify Handouts and Presentations required
☐	Identify Participants (below or attach list)

Name	Phone	E-mail

	Meeting Logistics			
☐	Lodging requirements			
☐	Meeting Facilities:			
	☐ Host provides (facilitator provides input)			
	☐ Facilitator provides			
☐	Room Size Estimate: (6 sq ft x # participants)			
☐	Breakout Rooms (number & size)			
☐	Food: Meals, Snacks, Drinks			
	Equipment		**Consumables**	
☐	Easels	☐	Markers (fresh)	
☐	Projection Screen	☐	Paper or Index Cards	
☐	Projector	☐	Name Tags or Tents	
☐	High Speed Internet	☐	Flip charts	
☐	Microphones & Speakers	☐	Sticky Walls	
☐	Computer(s)	☐	Portable Facilitation Walls	
☐	Printer	☐	Thumb cymbals or horn	
☐	Speaker Phone	☐	Masking Tape	
☐	Extension Cords	☐	Scotch Tape	
☐	Multi-Outlet Power Strip	☐	4 Color ¾" Dots	
☐		☐		
☐	Develop Room Organization Plan & Design			

"ICE" Problem Solving

Background

In 2003 Wayne Vick, CPF and Charles Markert, CPF were discussing and exploring problem solving models when they asked themselves how do most Americans approach solving problems? In general they determined that most people approach problem solving by:

- o describing the immediate problem, probably a superficial part of the overall problem,
- o determine likely answers based on a limited field of options to correct the problem,
- o make a decision that best fits their current situation and level of knowledge, often the safest with the least use of resources and one that the manager is most familiar with, and
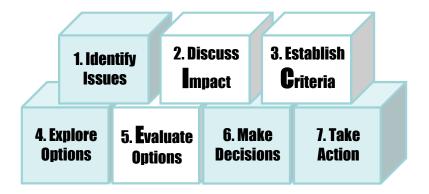- o implement the decision.

What they felt they had uncovered was three elements, generally required for long-term success of problem solving, were missing.

They called these three elements "ICE" or
- o Impact of the problem,
- o Criteria for evaluating options, and
- o Evaluation of the options based on the established and objective criteria.

These three elements are the source of the model's name. The ICE Model is described below:

1. **Identify Issues:** or Define the Problem. It is said that a well defined problem is already half solved. So, take the time to explore and define the problem. In some cases this may be identifying issues as a means of defining the problem. You may wish to go further to create a problem

definition statement that encompasses the issues identified.

2. **Discuss Impact:** When you have identified the issues or defined the problem, we believe the problem definition should move another step to examine the real impact. What happens if it isn't fixed? What does the problem affect? Learning the impact helps to establish what solutions must address to be successful. Addressing this in the discussion also helps with the next step.

3. **Establish Criteria:** These are the factors that are used to assess the proposed options against. Instead of making a gut level decision, identifying the criteria to be used to evaluate the options against provides factors that help ensure a complete and consistent evaluation of the options is undertaken.

4. **Explore Options:** Based on your definition of the problem and the impact, what options that may lead to a solution. This starts with brainstorming possible solutions. Discussion should follow focused on finding additional options. Try mixing elements of each option. The idea is to identify any possible options.

5. **Evaluate Options:** Once the options have been identified it's time to evaluate them against the criteria. Will any of the options adequately solve the problem? Generally, some scoring method is used against each option to determine which options best address the most criteria.

6. **Make Decisions:** Of the options assessed which best meets the criteria? Were there any unintended consequences identified? What option are we going to implement? If none of the options are sufficient to adequately solve the problem should any of them be implemented?

7. **Take Action:** What actions need to take place to implement the decision?

Application

Inherent in a facilitators repertoire of techniques are group discussion frameworks. These frameworks enable a group to engage in discussion with focus and purpose aimed toward taking action. In a way discussion models are fundamental frameworks of a streamlined problems solving approach. We have aligned the FEMA discussion framework in the table below to show the relationship between the typical approach to problem solving, the elements of ICE and the discussion framework. As you can see the typical

ICE Model	FEMA Framework
1. ID Issue	Facts
2. Impact	Emotions
3. Criteria	Meaning
4. Options	
5. Evaluation	
6. Decision	Action
7. Action	

approach doesn't even begin to address the reflective or interpretive side of a discussion while the FEMA approach is somewhat intuitive. Now, granted, a discussion framework is an incomplete problem solving model in itself. However, it illustrates for us what we tend to miss in our discussions and in our problem solving; the internalization part of the analysis. How does it affect us and what are the repercussions?

As the reflective and interpretive elements are crucial to discussion, ICE elements are critical to a well solved problem. ICE examines the internalization elements of a problem by scrutinizing the impact issues have on the people and systems involved. It goes further by establishing, after discussion of the issues and impacts, the criteria by which options are evaluated. This is done before the options are examined.

The ICE Model of Problem Solving is a basic problem solving model that can be used as the structure of a problem solving meeting or as an element of a problem solving activity in a larger more complex meeting.

References
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Please note that the diagram that follows depicts both models and shows how each section of the models relates to the other.

This conversation method covers the four elements that must be considered in nearly every discussion. There can be more elements, such as in problem solving we look for options, but usually not less.

Focus Question		
Structure	**Sample Questions**	**Construct questions for your meeting**
Facts Object	What are the facts? What do we know about this?	
Emotions Reflective	How do we feel about this? How does this impact you?	
Meaning Interpretive	What is the meaning or implications of this?	
Action Decisional	How will we proceed? Given what we've learned, What actions might we take? Or What might we do to overcome this problem?	Explore options Build the best solution ID actions

ICE Problem Solving Planning Worksheet

Frame the Problem		

Step	Sample Questions	Construct questions for your meeting
Identify Issue(s)	What are the facts? What do we know about this?	
Discuss Impact	How do we feel about this? How does this impact you? or others?	
Establish Criteria	What needs to happen to be successful?	
Explore Options	Explore options to solve issue while meeting criteria	
Evaluate Options	What might be unintended consequences? Mix & match elements to build the best solution	
Make Decisions	How will we proceed? Given what we've learned, What actions might we take?	
Take Action	ID actions for testing solution, preparation and implementation.	

Thou Shall Deliver an Advanced Agenda

Minimum: Developing a great agenda is not much good if you don't give people the time to prepare for it. Depending on the type of meeting, in general, we recommend the agenda goes out to all participants at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The purpose for doing this is to provide advanced notice of the topics and agenda items that you will be covering to give the participants time to prepare for it.

The exception for this is an Urgent meeting. In the case of an urgent meeting there is just one topic and one objective. Participants should be told what is needed from them.

A Step Beyond:

Provide Background Materials: The meeting leader takes a step beyond when they make sure everyone has access to any relevant background materials. Participants, of course, have the obligation of reviewing the agenda and background materials and arriving at the meeting prepared. If the meeting organizer has not provided adequate information about the objectives of the meeting, the participants should take the initiative to ask. No one should arrive at a meeting not knowing why they are there-- and what is supposed to be accomplished.

The Personal Touch: Contacting participants and discussing with them the preparations that they need to make is one way to ensure that the participants know how important the meeting is. This is also a good time to discuss the meeting roles that you identified in to ask individual members to fulfill specific roles. (Meeting roles were discussed in "A Step Beyond" for Commandment II - pages 12 & 13)

Phase 3 - Conducting

Thou Shall Set Up Meeting Space

Minimum: just before the meeting is scheduled to begin arrive in the room to arrange the space, tables and chairs, to be most conducive to the type of meeting being held, set up materials; post information (agenda, purpose, action list and parking lot) on the wall, and to set up in confirm operations of a computer and projector, if required.
Other things you might consider our posting a sticky wall, setting up easels and flipcharts, and putting out markers, pens and paper. If necessary you might ask another participant to help

The Parking Lot: One tool that should be found at every meeting is the parking lot. A Parking lot is simply a couple of sheets of flip chart paper hung on the wall and labeled: "Parking Lot." The biggest question that people have relative to a parking lot is when to park an issue or not. The decision is actually very simple process.

The Park It or Not Process:
Is the topic of discussion germane to the purpose of the group?
    If yes –next question
    If no – refocus discussion
Is the topic of discussion important to the current agenda topic?
    If yes – continue - but get to the point
    If no – park it and refocus discussion

Whenever a member brings up a question or discussion topic that is not part of the group's agenda, simply "park" the question/comment in the lot. Return to the parking lot at the end of the meeting, during the close out process, and either address items that were not addressed during the meeting (if there is time) or assign an action (often this is to put them on the agenda for the next meeting).

If your group is having difficulty staying on track, consider how well you are using the "parking lot.

A Step Beyond:

Select the room based on the type of meeting.
Organize the physical environment so people are attentive to the meeting content. No one should sit behind or to the side of your speakers. Make sure there are seats for all attendees, and if taking notes is required, a surface to write on, too. Make sure visuals are visible and that people can hear. You may need to use a microphone. You can pass props or samples around the room for viewing.

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Thou Shall Start & End on Time

Minimum: Start the meeting on time and end it on time (or even early). Starting on time requires discipline by the organizer and the participants. Participants that arrive late show a lack of consideration for those that were on time. This sets a precedent with the participants of that says I appreciate your effort to be here. And if all participants know that the leader is going to start the meeting right on time, there is a much greater likelihood that everyone else will make the effort to be punctual. If someone comes in late let them settle themselves in and you can check in with them during the first available break in the agenda.

End it at the appointed time or if only 30 minutes are required to accomplish the meeting objectives, the meeting should end after only 30 minutes. It would be a waste of everyone's time to let it go on any longer than that.

Finishing in a timely manner is also crucial. Out of respect for the commitment and sanity of everyone who attends, meetings should never run over the time allotted, especially regularly scheduled meetings. If everyone agreed that the meeting would last an hour, the meeting should not run any longer than that. Keeping the agenda realistic is important, of course.

If the session gets bogged down in an issue, table it for another meeting. If the meeting must conclude by taking an action or decision, then schedule it accordingly. Tell all the participants before the meeting starts that it will go as long as necessary to reach the stated conclusion. Don't mislead people by minimizing the amount of work involved; that kind of trickery will only come back to haunt you.

A Step Beyond:
No one knows, before a meeting is concluded, exactly how long it's going to take to accomplish an agenda. Even the most professional facilitators are only guesstimating how much time it will take and usually, they apply more time than they feel they will need. Along with that time they also have couple of tricks that you can apply as well.

TIME CHECK PROCESS

1. Alert	2. Estimate	3. Alternatives	4. Impact	5. Agreement

Use Time Checks: a time check is a technique that is used by a meeting leader or facilitator to adjust the agenda to account for issues that may take longer to deal with than the time allotted in the agenda. The technique begins with an "Alert" from the leader that our agenda is in jeopardy. The leader or topic leader "Estimates" how long it will take to complete the current agenda item, then discusses the "Alternatives" and "Impact" of continuing or not, then suggests or requests an agreement to handling the problem. This agreement may result in a shorter agenda, limiting the discussion, or even placing the topic in the parking lot.

Thou Shall Kick-Off the Meeting

Minimum:
Highly effective and successful meetings are really made during two periods: kick-off and closing. The kick-off of the meeting sets the expectations for the work to be done during the meeting. Every meeting has kickoff. Whether it's well done or not remains to be seen. This commandment addresses the minimum information necessary to kickoff the meeting. The kick-off section will cover:

- Basic admin information
- Review the purpose of the meeting
- Review the agenda
- Review or Set ground rules
- Note the parking lot and action list

To make this commandment easy to follow we have included a Basic Meeting Kickoff Worksheet on page 25.

A Step Beyond:
There are a few practices that can use to propel your kickoff toward world-class meetings.
First, note that page 26 is a Complete Meeting Kickoff Worksheet. This worksheet incorporates several additional elements that may be included, as required. This includes outcomes and objectives, participant introductions and expectations, roles, and a decision list.

The kickoff of the meeting is a great time to begin encouraging people to participate. Introductions and expectations are key point to start this. Introductions should be used with a new group or with a group that has new members. Well-established groups should forego introductions. There are a wide variety of techniques that can be used to help engage and get to know the members of the group. Introduction exercises can be fun and informative, but must be balanced against the time they take. Managing expectations begins with the decision to hold a meeting. If done right, participant expectations will align with the agenda. If not well managed up front, the meeting leader may need to shape the expectations during their opening. The only way to know if you're going to meet someone's expectation is to uncover what their expectation is. This is often done as an activity around the introduction phase of the kickoff. The scribe, facilitator, or meeting leader should document the expectations of the participants. If a participant's stated expectation is unrealistic now is the time to discuss and channel their expectations toward reality. Just remember, a participant may expect more from a meeting than you, that doesn't make it wrong or unrealistic as long as there's a possibility of achieving it.

Encourage participation. Balance those members who tend to talk all the time with those who are shy. Actively solicit the quieter members to speak up and participate. Deliberately seek the views of new members in attendance, but be sensitive to those who may not be comfortable speaking in a group.

Basic Meeting Kickoff Worksheet

1	Welcome & Opening
	Meeting Kickoff Worksheet

	Admin ☐ Restrooms ☐ Stop Time	
☐	Session Purpose, Outcomes or Objectives	
☐	Agenda	
☐	Ground Rules	
	Parking Boards ☐ Parking Lot ☐ Actions List	

Complete Meeting Kickoff Worksheet

1	Welcome & Opening
	Meeting Kickoff Worksheet

	Opening	
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	**Admin** Restrooms Sign in sheet Start Time Stop Times	
☐	Session Purpose	
☐	Desired Outcomes	
☐	Specific Objectives	
☐	Agenda	
☐	Participant Introductions	
☐	Participant Expectations	

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	**Roles**
	Leader
	  Facilitator
	  Scribe
	  Time keeper
	  Observer	

☐	Ground Rules	
☐ ☐ ☐	**Parking Boards** Parking Lot Actions List Decision List	

Thou Shall Keep a Visual Record

Minimum: This commandment is about keeping the group focused on the work at hand. People are better able to stay present with the conversation, or work, if they see notes being taken either on a flip chart, computer/projector, or some other means visible to all members of the group.

Document Meeting Notes: One of the biggest issues with meetings is the way we take notes. Notes serve as our collective memory to remind us of what occurred during the meeting. If we each take our own notes then we are likely to have several different understandings of what occurred during the meeting based on our individual notes. This is not to say that individuals should not take notes. Clearly there is an expectation that each individual should take some personal notes. However, we can shape the notes taken during a meeting by keeping the work we're doing visible, up in front of the group.

Managing the Flow: As the meeting leader, scribe, or facilitator, we must be able to manage the flow of information so it can be captured accurately. During this period we should be using active listening skills and still have time to document the points that are being made. One technique used by professional facilitators is to ask for the "Brief Headline" and then speaker can expand and explain their point. After you've had the opportunity to document the headline you can turn to the speaker and Paraphrase - or restate what the participant said in different words, Summarize - or reduce what was said to it's core message, or Replay - Repeat what you heard using the participants words. If you adapt or change what was said as a brief headline then asked the participant if what you wrote reflects their intent.

Post Meeting Notes: As the work progresses, post the flip charts around the room from just right of the center (head of the room) working around the room. This will allow the team to see the progress they are making as the meeting moves forward.

A Step Beyond:
There several alternatives for keeping the work visible. These include the use of various tools such as flipcharts, sticky walls, whiteboards, wall templates, and computer with projector. We'll discuss tips for how to maximize a few of these here.

Flip Charts: Flip charts with an easel is probably the most popular method used for keeping meeting were present in visual for group. Here some tips for setting up and using flipcharts:
- Title and number each page. This allows you to keep track of the work chronologically.
- Add 7 to 10 ideas/comments per page. This makes it easier to read, keeps an organized, and allows for additional comments to be added in the whitespace later, if required.
- If available use three Primary marker colors for written words (Black, Blue, Green) and two bright colors for emphasis (Red, Yellow) (highlight, underline, or circle)
- Use bullets for primary notes and alternate the ink colors between two primary colors on each sheet (ie black and blue).
- Shift primary colors between topics (i.e. blue and green)

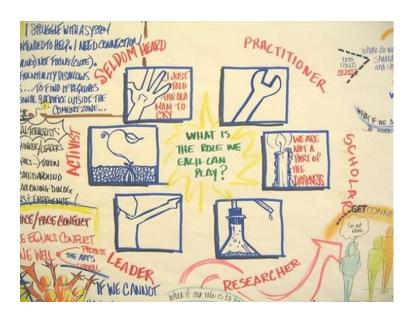**Computer with Projector:** The second most popular tool for keeping information present and visible during a meeting is the use of a computer with projector. Usually this is done with a word processing program. However, it may also include the use of group collaboration systems like GoToMeeting.com or ThinkTank from Group Systems. One benefit to this is the ease with which the meeting notes can be

completed. A drawback is that most times only a small portion of the work can be shown and the print size is often difficult to see for a group greater than ten.

Sticky Walls: These are probably the most popular method for full group engagement. With flipcharts and a computer there is normally just one individual writing or typing. With sticky walls we can do parallel processing, everyone can write their own comments. Because comments are written on individual sheets of paper they are easy to move around on the sticky wall. So a comment or idea

doesn't have to stay where it was initially placed on the sticky wall as it does with the other methods. This allows the group to organize shift combine and comment in a wide variety of different ways that are limited only by your imagination and the size of the sticky wall.

Wall Templates: Templates are a relatively new but are growing in popularity. They provide a structured approach to doing specific tasks in a graphic visualization approach. While anyone can use these (see www.grove.com) more complex issues are best discussed with a trained graphic facilitator.

Planned Engagement Methods: People learn and engaged in different ways. The facilitator or meeting leader should consider different methods of engaging individuals such as individual quiet thinking and writing time, small group work with report outs, and large group discussions.

It is important to mention that the meeting leaders' intent around this is to develop and maintain interest and participation of <u>all</u> attendees, and to simplify the creation of a report.

Phase 4 - Closing

Five Phases of a Meeting

Pre-Meeting → Planning → Conducting → Closing → Follow-Up

Thou Shall Walk the Walls

Minimum: The old saying goes that the work isn't done until the paperwork has been completed. Our axiom to that is a meeting isn't effective until you've walked the walls. Walk the walls? That's right walk the walls is a term used to describe the closing process for any meeting. This process is the secret to the most effective facilitated meetings. If you have followed the last commandment at the conclusion of your meeting there should be a wall of paper that reflects the work that your group has done. It's simple and very straightforward. The process is depicted in the flow diagram and steps below.

Closing: The Process
"Close to Action"

Step			
Review Activities Performed	Review work done	Is Follow-Up Needed?	Document Action
Review Expectations	Fulfilled?	Is Follow-Up Needed?	Document Action
Confirm Decisions	Still Applicable?	Discuss Benefits	Potential Barriers
Clear Issues	Covered in Session?	Still needs to be Covered?	Document Action
Confirm Actions	Review Actions	Confirm Who, What, When	
Next Steps	What happens next?	When's the next meeting?	What's on the Agenda?
Event Evaluation	Select Evaluation	Conduct Evaluation	Thank Participants & Adjourn

- Step 1: Review the activities performed in a chronological flow of the meeting and the results of each activity.

- Step 2: (if used) Review the decisions that were made during the meeting.

- Step 3: Review the issues in the parking lot. For each issue ask, "Was this covered during the meeting? if yes, cross it out. If no, ask "Does this still need to be covered?" If yes, document an action. If no, cross it out.

- Step 4: Review the action list to confirm; What is the action?, Who is responsible for it?, and When is it due?

- Step 5: Conduct a meeting evaluation. There are four types of evaluations that can be conducted for a meeting. Select one type to use. See the formats included on pages 32 to 35.

A Step Beyond:

Discuss Real Experience: During Step 4 of the closing process discuss real life scenarios and barriers to success that team members may experience as they try to accomplish the actions assigned.

Next Meeting: After walking through the closeout process above, if you are managing a routine or reoccurring meeting, take the time to establish the need for the next meeting, when & where, and basic agenda topics.

Review Decisions: If any decisions were made at the meeting (even if the decision was to "study the issue more") the meeting organizer should clearly summarize what needs to be done and who is going to do it. If the organizer fails to do this, one of the participants needs to speak up and request clarification of the next steps. This is crucial. If the participants leave the meeting and no one is accountable for taking action on the decisions that were made, then the meeting will have been a waste of everyone's time.

Thou Shall Assess the Meeting

Minimum: We've all heard the term "That which is measured gets attention." The aim of this commandment is to ensure that we take the time on a routine basis to examine and discuss ways to improve on our meeting behaviors.

Plus/Delta: The simplest meeting assessment methodology is the Plus/Delta in which we ask what did you like about the meeting and what can we do better. We have included a sample chart below. Instructions: (See page 32) Draw the following chart on a flip chart or whiteboard. While doing the Plus/Delta activity the facilitator, scribe, or meeting leader, is in an encouragement/receive mode. This means you write whatever is said and do not challenge the comment. If a comment is not understood you may question what the speaker means. To conduct the activity after drawing a diagram, simply ask the first question - the Delta, and allow people the opportunity to express their views. After a few minutes, switch to the Plus side. The entire Plus/Delta activity can take less than five minutes.

Plus	*Delta*
What were things that went well or that you liked about this meeting?	*What can be changed or improved for the next meeting?*

A Step Beyond: an alternative to the very simple Plus/Delta is a survey assessment conducted by the participants at the close of the meeting or an observer assessment form filled out by a member acting as an observer.

> **Effective Meeting Survey**: This assessment is a pre-designed tool that assesses 19 factors of a meeting. We have provided the survey form and a Talley form to use for a more intense review of the meeting. This form can be found on page 33 and 34. The drawback is that it can take more time and effort. But it can be provided at the start of the meeting as well.

> **Meeting Process Observer Log**: This assessment is filled out by a meeting member that agrees to perform the observer role. The rating section is similar to the survey assessment and assesses the same 19 factors. This form can be found on page 35.

Plus/Delta

What: Plus/Delta is a simple activity used to gather feedback from the group on what went well and what can be improved in future sessions.

When: It is used at the conclusion of a facilitated session.

How: 1. **Stop and Reflect:** At the conclusion of a facilitated event the facilitator will state to the participants: "OK we are nearly done. But first, we've put in a lot of effort

and need to take a few minutes to assess how we did so we might improve. While I set up a chart please take a moment to stop and reflect on the session. In particular, we want to know what went well and what could be improved in future events. Everything is fair game. I'll collect your thoughts in just a moment."

2. **Set Up the Work Space:** While the group is considering responses to your questions set up a flip chart like the image below:

  + = What went well during the session? Or What were the things that you liked?

  Δ = What could be changed, improved or done better next time?

3. **Accept Inputs:** Begin accepting inputs from participants. Write what they say. Anything goes.

  Options: As you take inputs ask for alternating inputs; one + and one Δ

  With Co-facilitators use two flip charts: mark one + and the other Δ. Each facilitator stands at a flip chart and the participants alternate their inputs between the two.

+	Δ
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

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Effective Meeting Survey

Instructions: circle the score that best represents the result of this meeting for each item of the survey. A yes response counts as five points and they know counts as zero.

Item #	Question	Hi/Yes Best	Yes/ OK	Neutral	No/ Not ok	Low/No Worse
1	Was there an agenda prepared?	5	4	3	2	1
2	Was the agenda delivered at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting?	Yes				No
3	Did the meeting start on time?	Yes				No
4	Was the purpose of the meeting posted on the wall?	Yes				No
5	How well did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator review the meeting kick off information?	5	3	0	-3	-5
6	Was attendance satisfactory?	Yes				No
7	To what extent was the meeting room pre-set to maximize the meeting type?	5	4	3	2	1
8	To what extent did the discussions pertain to the topic?	5	3	0	-3	-5
9	To what extent did the timekeeper alert the meeting leader to time limitations?	5	3	0	-3	-5
10	How well did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator keep a visual record of the results on the wall or screen?	5	3	0	-3	-5
11	How well did we make important decisions by consensus?	5	4	3	2	1
12	How well did we control negative or counter-productive behaviors?	5	4	3	2	1
13	How well did the Facilitator/Scribe look for and record action items, deadlines, people responsible?	5	3	0	-3	-5
14	How well did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator Walk-the-Walls/review the accomplishments and actions of the meeting during closing?	5	3	0	-3	-5
15	How well did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator remain neutral in that role?	5	3	0	-3	-5
16	How well was participation encouraged?	5	4	3	2	1
17	How well was the outcome achieved for each agenda item?	5	4	3	2	1
18	Did the meeting end on time?	Yes				No
19	Was the meeting productive? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10					
	total score					

Comments:

Effective Meeting Survey - Talley

Instructions: Transfer the scores from the individual surveys into each column, one column per survey. If an individual leaves a survey question blank, do likewise. Total the scores entered for each row, then divide the total by the number of surveys included in the row. The result is the average score for the right column. Add the averages together at the bottom for a meeting score.

#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Sum	Avg
1	Was there an agenda prepared? (1-5)												
2	Was the agenda delivered at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting? Yes=5 No=1												
3	Did the meeting start on time? Yes=5 No=1												
4	Was the purpose of the meeting posted on the wall? Yes=5 No=1												
5	How well did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator review the meeting kick off information? (1-5)												
6	Was attendance satisfactory? Yes=5 No=1												
7	To what extent was the meeting room pre-set to maximize the meeting type? (1-5)												
8	To what extent did the discussions pertain to the topic? (1-5)												
9	To what extent did the timekeeper alert the meeting leader to time limitations? (1-5)												
10	To what extent did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator keep a visual record of the results on the wall or screen? (1-5)												
11	To what extent did we make decisions using the proper methods, including consensus? (1-5)												
12	To what extent did we control negative or counter-productive behaviors? (1-5)												
13	To what extent did the Facilitator/Scribe look for and record action items, deadlines, people responsible? (1-5)												
14	To what extent did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator Walk-the-Walls/review the accomplishments and actions of the meeting during closing? (1-5)												
15	To what extent did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator remain neutral in that role? (1-5)												
16	To what extent was participation encouraged? (1-5)												
17	To what extent was the outcome achieved for each agenda item? (1-5)												
18	Did the meeting end on time? Yes=5 No=1												
19	Was the meeting productive? (1-10)												
	Average meeting score (19 - 100)												

Comments: *Please transfer survey comments to the back didn't post the results to your section of the shared drive*

MEETING PROCESS OBSERVER LOG

_____   _____
process observer   _date_

Item #	Question	Yes 5 pts.	No 0 pts.	Some-what 3 pts.	score
1	Was there an agenda prepared?				
2	Was the agenda delivered at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting?				
3	Did the meeting start on time?				
4	Was the purpose of the meeting posted on the wall?				
5	Did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator review the meeting kick off information?				
6	Was attendance satisfactory?				
7	Was the meeting room pre-set to maximize the meeting type?				
8	Did all discussions pertain to the topic?				
9	Did the timekeeper alert the meeting leader to time limitations?				
10	Did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator keep a visual record of the results on the wall or screen?				
11	Did we make important decisions by consensus?				
12	Did we control negative or counter-productive behaviors?				
13	Did the Facilitator/Scribe look for and record action items, deadlines, people responsible?				
14	Did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator Walk-the-Walls/review the accomplishments and actions of the meeting during closing?				
15	Did the Meeting Leader/Facilitator remain neutral in that role?				
16	Was participation encouraged?				
17	Was the outcome achieved for each agenda item?				
18	Did the meeting end on time?				
19	Was the meeting productive? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10				
	total score				

How to use this form:

1) Follow general process observer role requirements during the meeting.

2) Answer questions 1-19 as appropriate throughout the meeting. At the end of the meeting, take time to review your notes and complete scoring the questions.

3) If an item is answered with a "yes," then that item is scored as 5 points; if "no," then it's 0 points; and if "somewhat," then it's 3 points.

4) Annotate and total the scores. If your score is 100, you had a perfect meeting.

5) Return this form to the R&D Coordinator with a copy to the Meeting Leader after you have completed it. This form will remain in the Project binder and be used to check your project's meeting progress.

6) Team Leader: Based on the individual items, note what you can do to improve your meetings:

_____

_____

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Phase 5 - Follow-Up

Thou Shall Publish Meeting Notes

Minimum: complete a highly effective meeting it imperative to translate the meeting notes into a report, and that this report is sent to everyone involved, invited, and impacted by the meeting.

Gather Artifacts: Artifacts of a meeting are the materials and notes that are left behind when the participants leave. Most facilitators consider the artifacts to be those things posted on the wall at the conclusion of the meeting. It will also include notes or charts taken down to make space for other work. All of these artifacts can be used in crafting the report.

Constructing the Report: A meeting report should memorialize the process used during the meeting so that, when referring back to the meeting, the process and results will be clear. To do this the report should contain a list of participants, the agenda (as adjusted), a description of each agenda item or the activity, or activities, related to that item, the results of each activity, and any actions assigned or taken or agreements made during the meeting.

It is appropriate to include action plans generated during the meeting in the report. An effective action plan includes:
- the specific action item,
- the name of the person who committed to "owning" the accomplishment of the action item,
- the due date of the action item,
- an agreement about what constitutes completion of the action item.

Deliver the Report: In most cases for meetings that are held of a duration equal to or less than one day the meeting report should be delivered within 72 hours, if not sooner, to the meeting participants and those affected by the decisions and actions.
- Report should be delivered to all meeting participants, invited personnel, and personnel impacted by the decisions and actions.
- Additionally, meeting reports should be filed on an accessible shared drive along with reports from other groups.

A Step Beyond:

Organizations that practice world-class meetings target the publishing of meeting notes, including the agenda and action plan, within 24 hours. People will most effectively contribute to results if they get started on action items right away. They still have a fresh memory of the meeting, the discussion and the rationale for the chosen direction. They remain enthusiastic and ready to get started. A delay in the distribution of minutes will hurt your results since most people wait for the minutes to arrive before they begin to tackle their commitments.

- Report for a special purpose meeting or routine staff meeting should be delivered to participants within 48 hours.
- Report for a Planning or longer (>1.5 day) Special Purpose meeting within 72 hours.

Here are some tips for effective follow-up from world-class meeting leaders for reoccurring meetings:

- Add new members to your group's database, address list, listserv, etc.
- Call or email members who missed the meeting in order to keep them informed. Provide them with updates and ask if they would like to volunteer for any upcoming events or actions.
- Call new people who came to the meeting, thank them for their participation, and ask if they have any questions that you can address. If a large number of new members showed up, send thank-you notes or e-mails with an invitation to the next event or meeting.
- Place a copy of the meeting notes in an organizational notebook, website, or group hard drive so that everyone knows where the "institutional memory" is kept.
- If a big event is coming up, give members updates on how the planning is going and reminders of any important dates and times.
- Consider information, suggestions, and request from this meeting when planning your next meeting.