

QUALITY TEAM MEETINGS

If you hear moans and groans every time you mention the word meeting, perhaps it's time to reconsider the purpose and include some basic human elements to engage all team members.



MEETINGS can be a productive and positive experience or a waste of time.

Many business owners spend up to half their year in meetings and much of this can be a complete waste of energy, money and time.

Time wasting meetings usually have a few characteristics in common: the information could have been distributed by another medium, there was no clearly defined purpose or action plan, or it was hijacked by ego based power plays which often results in problem-based rather than solution-based interaction.

To conduct effective meetings, you need to bring logic, preparation, fun, creativity, action, achievement, teamwork, clarity and vision to the table.

Meetings are considerably more than an agenda, a discussion and an action plan. There are some necessary human elements without which, even the most well planned agenda could go belly-up.

Six Fundamental Human Elements

Human Element 1: Provide a sense of safety, security, logic and preparedness.

Some people in your team find meeting in a group situation difficult. Their

participation will be more rewarding if you provide them with some fundamentals.

You should...

- Provide food and non-alcoholic beverages. Nuts, water and fruit work a treat and traditional vices like coffee, cake and sausage rolls can turn a business decision around.
- Provide safety for the group by managing conflict and not letting power plays, spotlight harlots and drama queens take over the meeting. Too much over talking and conflict scares the willies out of some people.
- Allow an opportunity for the non-talkers to speak.
- Some people discuss items better in pairs than in large groups. Allow safe discussion by breaking the team into pairs for a discussion on a topic, then join them into groups of four; appoint a scribe and have someone present the group's thoughts back to the larger group.

Human Element 2: Provide some fun, spontaneity and encourage creativity.

Some people find meetings very boring if there is not some element of fun and

creativity. If you do not provide it, they can hijack the meeting by being the fun they need, causing disruptions, telling inappropriate jokes or clipping main points of discussion.

You should...

- Provide an agenda on coloured paper. Attach it to a paper aeroplane template and send it in the post as an invitation or attach as a scroll to a bottle of wine and invite your team to wine and cheese.
- Add a ball to the meeting - only people with the ball can talk.

Human Element 3: Purpose, action and achievement.

Engage your team by establishing a clear protocol which states you end meetings with an action plan. Allow passion, enthusiasm and a sense of achievement to infiltrate your meetings.

- Establish a purpose to your meetings.
- Keep the meeting on track - introduce time keeping tools such as a hourglass or gong.
- Introduce opinion polling where you allow people to state their opinion about a topic and have the team ask further about the opinion rather than knock it.

