

## Getting The Most From Your Team

The most important ingredient of any company is people, and more importantly the right people with the right attitude. Get your team and the atmosphere right and you have a winning formula. So, how do you get the best out of your team and what problems will you face as you move forward?



### ❖ Communication

For any team to succeed there must be constant communication. Regular meetings should be held with a clear written agenda. Do not hold meetings for the sake of meetings. Share company information.

### ❖ Vision

Formulate the company vision with your team. If they participate in setting the vision, then they will make it happen. Make the vision challenging but achievable. It can always be re-set later as the company matures and evolves.

### ❖ Business plan

Forming a business plan is the perfect opportunity to get your team working together to discuss where the company is now, where it needs to go and how to get there. For a business plan to succeed the team have to be involved from day one. If they are part of the plan, the plan will be followed through. In fact, discussing and setting the plan is far more important than the document itself.

### ❖ Delegation

As a company grows, the hardest thing for many people to do is delegate. We all think we can do the job better or do not have the patience to teach others to do the work as it takes twice as long as doing it ourselves. A company cannot expand and grow without delegation.

### ❖ Problem team members

Most teams at some stage have a rotten apple who disrupts the organisation and has a negative effect on everyone. This is one of the most difficult situations for managers to handle. Management must be proactive. You must sit the individual down to talk over all the issues. It must be made clear what is expected from them and the team as a whole. Listen to their views and try to find a way to resolve problems.

### ❖ Mentoring and training

Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses and it is essential that team members recognise and appreciate the benefits of this. To highlight each member's virtues, regular review meetings should take place. These give management the opportunity to praise the employee but at the same time bring up any issues and find out where training will be appropriate. Stretch your people, give them new challenges, a bored team player stops contributing.



### ❖ Use your diary

Schedule time with each of your direct reports once a month to sit down and talk things over. Schedule two hours so that even if you don't use it you won't have a meeting clash.

Use this meeting to minimise interruptions during the rest of the month and you'll find you have more time on your hands.

### ❖ Celebrate success

Everyone likes to make money but everyone also likes to be successful and be part of a winning team.

Always praise success and celebrate important team events.

Encourage team members to help each other; this not only helps the team but also team players learn from each other's skill sets.

### ❖ Captain of your ship

How do you know when you have a good team? If you are feeling redundant and business is going well, you have achieved your goal.

Now you can do what you are good at, sit at the bridge of your ship and decide which way to steer your vessel.

Your team will trust you and follow you, but don't forget to get below occasionally to stoke the boilers!

# How To Manage A Meeting Effectively

Typically we monitor performance by looking at accounts. However numbers don't rule the world, people do. This article looks at how to hold effective meetings and puts into context a lot of the mechanisms available to generate profitable growth.



## Why Hold meetings?

A well organised meeting can be a really effective way of:

- Sharing information
- Managing performance and resources
- Deciding
- Delegating actions to protect the leader from trying to everything themselves

Too often the meeting is a waste of time because not enough time has gone into making it useful.

## Plan the Meeting

To get the most out of a meeting, it is essential to plan it. That means :

- Setting an agenda
- Making sure participants know what they are contributing - that may well mean talking with them prior to the meeting
- Sorting out the room so it has the necessary bits and pieces
- Circulating the minutes of the last meeting to clarify who has done what from the previous meeting

This will enable you to only talk about the matters arising rather than waste valuable time in the meeting finding out what has and has not been done.

## Hold the Meeting

During a meeting, it is essential that everyone:

- Participates/supports and seeks win-win situations
- Listens, Listens, Listens, is Open-minded, is accountable, is HERE now
- Has no Hidden Agenda's, no secondary meetings, no pocket vetoes and does not victimise attendees
- Sticks to the Agenda and timings
- Documents the key points and areas of agreement/disagreement, actions and timescales

## The Chairman's Role

The Chairman's role is to keep the meeting on track by:

- Open up a new Agenda item
- Keep the meeting focused on the agenda item and not stray too far from the point
- Summarise the view of the meeting with respect to that Agenda item. It can be tricky when the Chairman disagrees with this personally, but that's what a good Chairman has to do from time to time
- Open the next Agenda item

Chairing a meeting is a role in itself.

Take time to watch others in action and see how they do it. It can be helpful for someone other than "The Boss" to chair the meeting.

It can be helpful to ask somebody else to take the minutes. It spreads the work load and enables the Chairman to focus on managing the meeting.

However, it really does depend on the situation.

## Check Meeting Effectiveness

A successful meeting achieves its objectives by ensuring that:

- Decisions are summarised
- Action items and timescales are assigned and agreed
- Consensus is gained
- A follow-up date is set
- There is a debrief of meeting effectiveness, with an "Action Plan" for Improvement

If run properly, the meeting will end on time.

## After the Meeting

Ensure that everything is captured whilst minds are still relatively fresh:

- The nominated secretary to produce and distribute the minutes to all attendees (preferably within 24 hours)
- Actionees to take actions from the meeting and from any debrief
- Actionees to keep the chair/leader of the meeting informed on progress against their actions.



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