Meetings

Oh, no. Not another meeting.
Meetings

• “A meeting is a group of people who individually can accomplish nothing but who collectively decide nothing can be done.” Thomas Gorden. L.E.T. Chap. VII
• “Meetings are indispensable when you don't want to do anything.” J.K. Galbraith
Meetings

• Why meetings?
  ➢ face-to-face is the best interface.
  ➢ Tight feedback loop for info and emotion.
  ➢ Social contracts, negotiated agreements.
• Intel Corp.: meetings are work
• Cost of meetings: People * their hourly rate * 1.25 (overhead, benefits, vacation)
  ➢ Can easily run $ thousands per hour
Why do we hate meetings?

• Poorly run
• Do not stick to agenda
• There is no agenda
• Do not accomplish objective
• They waste your time because...
Why do you want a meeting?

- Do you want a decision?
- Do you want to generate ideas?
- Are you getting status reports?
- Are you communicating something?
- Are you making plans?
- At meeting's end, I want the group to ...
  - Know / decide / change / plan / act on
  - From Running Effective Meetings
Meeting Types

**Status / Informational**

- Focus: Review progress, gain feedback
- Flow: Primarily one-way
- Product: Information dissemination that affects everyone as a group
- Group size: unlimited
- Length: 30 – 90 minutes
- Tools: chairs, presentation slides, handout
Meeting Types

**Working / Problem Solving**
- Focus: Creation
- Flow: Primarily two-way
- Product: Decision, issue resolution, action plan
- Group size: 3 – 16
- Length: 1 – 3 hours
- Tools: tables, writing materials, coffee
Meeting Types

**Strategy / Vision Seeking**

- Focus: Direction setting
- Flow: Primarily two-way
- Product: strategy, broad plan, priorities
- Group size: 3 – 16
- Length: 1 – 3 days
- Tools: off-site conference
5 Ps of Meeting Preparation

Purpose – Why start?
• Why are you inviting people?
• What is telling you it is needed?
• What problems you are trying to solve?
• What kind of meeting is it?
  ➢ Status (don't let it become a Working meeting)
  ➢ Working
  ➢ Strategy
Product – What to end with?

- What will the meeting produce?
- What do you hope to achieve?
- What will change as a result?
- What specific things should be created?
- At the end, what should participants have in their hands, hearts, and heads?
5 Ps of Meeting Preparation

Participants – who should be there?

- Who needs to be involved? Those with...
- Authority to act or make decisions
- Access to resources: contacts, time, $$$
- Expertise / Information / Perspective
- Interest in the outcome: they are materially affected or buy-in is critical
- Too many? Elect/appoint representatives.
5 Ps of Meeting Preparation

Process – how does it run?
• Start with the agenda
• What are the rules, methods and mechanics of your meeting?
• What supports the purpose and product?
• Robert's Rules of Order (formal meetings)
• e.g. time limits on speaking, round-robin turn taking, ideas are posted not evaluated
5 Ps of Meeting Preparation

Probable Issues – how can it stop?

• Are there participants who do not accept the purpose?
• What could hinder participants from achieving the product?
• What are the perspectives or concerns of the participants?
• What should **not** be discussed?
• Are some people on unfavorable terms?
• Do you expect dysfunctional behavior?
Sign posted in meeting rooms:

- Do you know the purpose of this meeting?
- Do you have an agenda?
- Do you know your role?
- Intel Meeting Basics document
Agenda

• Latin for "to drive on, set in motion"
• Set The Right Tone
  ➢ Declares **type and purpose** of meeting
  ➢ Why should people accept your invitation?
  ➢ Lists specific issues to be discussed, by whom, and for how long
  ➢ Practicals happy, Theoreticals focused
Agenda

• Identify Topics For Discussion
  ➢ Constrains scope of issues
  ➢ Who leads this discussion
  ➢ For how long (timebox)
  ➢ Allows general preparation and may demand it
  ➢ Thinkers have opportunity to prepare, Riskers might actually do some preparation.

• What is the meeting Product?
  ➢ e.g. “select the best approach to develop...”, “decide which methodology should be used”
Agenda

● Status and working meetings are separate
● Estimate time frames for each item and who is presenting/leading/facilitating
● Invite only relevant attendees
● Publish 1 – 5 days before the meeting
● Clarify the decision making method
  ➢ authoritative (leader has full responsibility);
  ➢ consultative (leader makes a decision after weighing group input);
  ➢ voting; or consensus.
Rimmerman's Rules

- Leave rank at the door (all team members are equal)
- All ideas are good until the best one arises
- No whining, no whinging.
- Find at least one bright idea per session
- No sidebar communications
- If you have something to say, say it in the room
- No hostages; leave if you don't want to be here
- Identify problems but focus on solutions
- Review the next objectives before leaving
  - ensure they are realistic in scope
- Leave with a sense of accomplishment
- Expect work outside of the meeting
  - use subgroups and task forces
Stuck Meetings

- What else is like this? What have others done?
- Where can I find an idea?
- What ideas can I modify to fit my problem?
- How can this product/service be adapted to other uses?
- Can it be magnified (more features, more storage); or conversely, can it be miniaturized?
- Can components be added, or rearranged, or combined with other components to create new products?
Stuck Meetings

• Reframe the problem
• From: The elevators are too slow.
  ➢ Solution is way too expensive to be feasible.
• To: People are bored waiting for elevator.
  ➢ Install mirrors so people have something to do during their ride. Add estimated wait times to call buttons to adjust expectations.
Stuck Meetings

- Items not on agenda go to the “Parking Lot” or on a “Bin List”.
- Prevents meeting highjacking.
Minutes

- Minutes are a summary of what happened
- Minutes are proof that the meeting was useful and time was not wasted.
Minutes

- Use agenda as guide for meeting minutes
- Record only *key points* of discussion per agenda item. Recognize essential ideas.
  - Summary only. A précis may be too long.
  - Participants must know they were heard.
- Record conclusions, decisions made or deferred
- What changed as a result of the meeting?
- Action Items: **Who** does **What** by **When**
  - No action item? Why were they there?
Minutes

- Essential to creating group memory
- Management document for meeting follow-up
- Publish within 24 hours!
  - Signals importance
  - Events still fresh in everyone’s mind and they have had a night’s sleep to “process”.
  - Optimum time to review for accuracy & completeness, to be reminded of action items.
- Send to all present, absent, and anyone responsible for an action item
Meeting Wrap up

- Never put up a slide “Any questions?”
- Duplicate Agenda as last slide
  - Point to each item and ask, “Did we cover this sufficiently?”
- Review meeting products
- Agree upon action items and who is responsible