

## Meeting Management

### (Second in a series)

Last month, I laid out some of the many reasons why meetings fail. So let's move forward in discovering strategies and methods to avoid those many pitfalls. I believe the upfront time investment in getting your meetings organized and focused pay great dividends down the road. By getting organized upfront, you create clarity of purpose for both individuals and the group minimizing ambiguity, confusion and the potential for conflict.

#### Meeting Mechanics: Getting Organized and Focused

Bear in mind that all meetings are NOT the same and to treat them as such can be fatal in terms of effective use of people resources and time.

#### Step #1

Determine the Mission of group. As the leader, answer this question: What is the reason for the existence of these meetings, what is hoped to be accomplished? Based on the Mission, consider these meeting variables: size, frequency, composition, motivation and knowledge of members, plus what type of decision-making process is best suited.

#### Step #2

Plan and prepare for the meeting.

- Define objectives that are outcome-oriented, for example, (to explain the new performance appraisal system vs. to have all attending managers understand, accept, and commit to implementing the new performance appraisal system.)
- Develop the record keeping mechanism. Some good choices.
  - Summary: main points of proceedings, agreements and disagreements, and positions taken by various group members
  - Action: contains only assignments, actions to be taken, and other follow-up plans (Who, What and When chart)
- Draft agenda
  - State the item objective and provide context as to why the item is there
  - Create time limits for each item (otherwise, meetings can last FOREVER)
  - Review any prior conclusions affecting the item
  - Identify barriers to achievement
  - Create a plan for attaining the objective
  - Consider group's readiness
  - **Provide copies of the agenda to participants prior to the meeting!**
- Determine physical meeting space arrangement to match agenda needs

With your meeting planning complete, next month I'll share some techniques to run the meeting effectively.

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