

PARTS OF A MEETING & USEFUL PHRASES

Goal: Running Team Meetings Smoothly

Tips & Strategies:

Parts of a Meeting

Time, date and venue – Ensure everyone knows when it is, and where *exactly* it is, to encourage punctuality.

Agenda / Focus – ensure everyone has a copy or email of the agenda / focus, at least the basics, so that they can prepare ideas and questions ahead of time, and do research if need be. No one likes surprises, and everyone wants to feel valued. Also, we want to give the message that participants are encouraged to give opinions and communicate ideas. We don't want to give the impression that we are just lecturing to them. That encourages passive, bored attendance.

Outline – if the previous document is just an introduction to the focus, then prepare a more detailed outline for the meeting. However please do not write paragraphs. Keep it all in bullet points and point-form notes. You want people listening to you and following the meeting, not reading the outline.

Control – The chairperson should maintain control and direction of the meeting, and that also includes letting others have their say. Sometimes acting as a 'facilitator' instead of a 'dictator' pays off well, especially regarding employee empowerment and morale. Sometimes it's better to "lead from behind the group" i.e. take an active back seat and facilitate discussion after your introduction to the agenda main point.

Time management – After a few opinions have been generated it is time to move on to the next point. Gathering feedback is the point, not to 'win'. The person in charge (i.e. you!) will make a decision later based on the notes (called 'minutes'). Also, it is the chairperson's responsibility to start and end on time, regardless of latecomers and heated discussions. Everyone appreciates a shorter rather than a longer meeting!

Communication – instruct everyone on the '3Ps' of communication, i.e. of using polite, professional and positive language. They cannot interrupt rudely, they cannot criticize in an aggressive way, they must present things in a factual way, etc.

Record keeping – After you have made it through the outline agenda, you will need to also record 'action steps' or 'action points', and delegate responsibilities to your team. Make it very clear who is responsible for what, and why, and by when. These action steps will be the first thing discussed at the next meeting.

AOB? – The last thing, time permitting, is to ask Any Other Business? This is a chance for the team to brainstorm or bring up other issues that may be on their mind.

The Business Meeting Structure and Language

Formal meetings generally follow a more or less similar structure and can be divided into the following parts:

I - Introductions

Opening the Meeting
Welcoming and Introducing Participants
Stating the Principal Objectives of a Meeting
Giving Apologies for Someone Who is Absent

II - Reviewing Past Business

Reading the Minutes (notes) of the Last Meeting
Dealing with Recent Developments

III - Beginning the Meeting

Introducing the Agenda
Allocating Roles (secretary, participants)
Agreeing on the Ground Rules for the Meeting (contributions, timing, decision-making, etc.)

IV - Discussing Items

Introducing the First Item on the Agenda
Closing an Item
Next Item
Giving Control to the Next Participant

V - Finishing the Meeting

Summarizing
Finishing Up
Suggesting and Agreeing on Time, Date and Place for the Next Meeting
Thanking Participants for Attending
Closing the Meeting

The following phrases are useful if you are called on to conduct a meeting:

Opening

Good morning/afternoon, everyone.
If we are all here, let's get started / start the meeting / start.

Welcoming and Introducing

Please join me in welcoming (name of participant)
We're pleased to welcome (name of participant)
I'd like to extend a warm welcome to (name of participant)
It's a pleasure to welcome (name of participant)
I'd like to introduce (name of participant)

Stating the Principal Objectives

We're here today to ...
I'd like to make sure that we ...
Our main aim today is to ...
I've called this meeting in order to ...

Giving Apologies for Someone Who is Absent

I'm afraid... (Name of participant) can't be with us today. She is in...
Unfortunately, (name of participant) ... will not be with us to day because he ...
I have received apologies for absence from (name of participant), who is in (place).

Reading the Minutes (notes) of the Last Meeting

To begin with I'd like to quickly go through the minutes of our last meeting.
First, let's go over the report from the last meeting, which was held on (date)
Here are the minutes from our last meeting, which was on (date)

Dealing with Recent Developments

Jack, can you tell us how the XYZ project is progressing?
Jack, how is the XYZ project coming along?
John, have you completed the report on the new accounting package?
Has everyone received a copy of the Tate Foundation report on current marketing trends?

Moving Forward

So, if there is nothing else we need to discuss, let's move on to today's agenda.
Shall we get down to business?
If there are no further developments, I'd like to move on to today's topic.

Introducing the Agenda

Have you all received a copy of the agenda?
There are X items on the agenda. First, ... second, ... third, ... lastly, ...
Shall we take the points in this order?
If you don't mind, I'd like to go in order today.
Skip item 1 and move on to item 3
I suggest we take item 2 last.

Allocating Roles (secretary, participants)

(name of participant) has agreed to take the minutes.
(name of participant), would you mind taking the minutes?
(name of participant) has kindly agreed to give us a report on ...
(name of participant) will lead point 1, (name of participant) point 2, and (name of participant) point 3.
(name of participant), would you mind taking notes today?

Agreeing on the Ground Rules for the Meeting (contributions, timing, decision-making, etc.)

We will first hear a short report on each point first, followed by a discussion of ...
I suggest we go around the table first.
Let's make sure we finish by ...
I'd suggest we ...
There will be five minutes for each item.
We'll have to keep each item to 15 minutes. Otherwise we'll never get through.

Introducing the First Item on the Agenda

So, let's start with ...
I'd suggest we start with...
Why don't we start with...
So, the first item on the agenda is
Pete, would you like to kick off?
Shall we start with ...
(name of participant); would you like to introduce this item?

Closing an Item

I think that takes care of the first item.
Shall we leave that item?
Why don't we move on to...?
If nobody has anything else to add, lets...

Next Item

Let's move onto the next item
Now that we've discussed X, let's now ...
The next item on today's agenda is...
Now we come to the question of.

Giving Control to the Next Participant

I'd like to hand over to (name of participant), who is going to lead the next point.
Next, (name of participant) is going to take us through ...
Now, I'd like to introduce (name of participant) who is going to...

Summarizing

Before we close today's meeting, let me just summarize the main points.
Let me quickly go over today's main points.
To sum up...
OK, why don't we quickly summarize what we've done today?
In brief ...
Shall I go over the main points?

Finishing Up

Okay, it looks as though we've covered the main items.
If there are no other comments, I'd like to wrap this meeting up.

Let's bring this to a close for today.
Is there Any Other Business?

Suggesting and Agreeing on Time, Date and Place for the Next Meeting

Can we set the date for the next meeting, please?
So, the next meeting will be on ... (date), the . . . (day) of... (month) at ...(time)
Let's next meet on ... (day), the . . . (date) of.... (month) at ... What about the following
Wednesday? How is that?

Thanking Participants for Attending

I'd like to thank Marianne and Jeremy for coming over from London.
Thank you all for attending.
Thanks for your participation.

Closing the Meeting

The meeting is finished, we'll see each other next ...
The meeting is closed.
I declare the meeting closed.

The following phrases are used to participate in a meeting. These phrases are useful for expressing your ideas and giving input to a meeting.

Getting the Chairperson's Attention

(Mister/Madam) chairman...
May I have a word?
If I may, I think...
Excuse me for interrupting...
May I come in here?

Giving Opinions

I'm positive that...
I (really) feel that...
In my opinion...
The way I see things...
If you ask me, I tend to think that...

Asking for Opinions

Are you positive that...
Do you (really) think that...?
(Name of participant) can we get your input?
How do you feel about...?

Commenting

That's interesting.
I never thought about it that way before.
Good point!

I get your point.
I see what you mean.

Agreeing

I totally agree with you.
Exactly!
That's (exactly) the way I feel.
I have to agree with (name of participant).

Disagreeing

Unfortunately, I see it differently.
Up to a point I agree with you, but...
(I'm afraid) I can't agree

Advising and Suggesting

Let's...
We should...
You could...
How/What about...
I suggest/recommend that...

Clarifying

Let me spell out...
Have I made that clear?
Do you see what I'm getting at?
Let me put this another way...
I'd just like to repeat that...

Requesting Information

Please, could you...
I'd like you to...
Would you mind...?
I wonder if you could...

Asking for Repetition

I'm afraid I didn't understand that. Could you repeat what you just said?
I didn't catch that. Could you repeat that, please?
I missed that. Could you say it again, please?
Could you run that by me one more time?

Asking for Clarification

I don't quite follow you. What exactly do you mean?
I'm afraid I don't quite understand what you're getting at.
Could you explain to me how that is going to work?
I don't see what you mean. Could we have some more details, please?

Asking for Verification

You did say next week, didn't you? ('Did' is stressed)
Do you mean that...?
Is it true that...?

Asking for Spelling

Could you spell that, please?
Would you mind spelling that for me, please?

Asking for Contributions

We haven't heard from you yet, (name of participant).
What do you think about this proposal?
Would you like to add anything, (name of participant)?
Has anyone else got anything to contribute?
Are there any more comments?

Correcting Information

Sorry, I think you misunderstood what I said.
Sorry, that's not quite right.
I'm afraid you don't understand what I'm saying.
That's not quite what I had in mind.
That's not what I meant.

Keeping the Meeting on Target (time, relevance, decisions)

We're running short of time.
Well, that seems to be all the time we have today.
Please be brief.
I'm afraid we've run out of time.
I'm afraid that's outside the scope of this meeting.
Let's get back on track, why don't we?
That's not really why we're here today.
Why don't we return to the main focus of today's meeting?
We'll have to leave that to another time.
We're beginning to lose sight of the main point.
Keep to the point, please.
I think we'd better leave that for another meeting.
Are we ready to make a decision?

NOTE: The above-suggested phrases and agenda outlines are obviously for a more formal and structured meeting. Some might even call this style old-fashioned and outdated, except for very serious meetings. Ultimately you as a (*new*) manager will have to decide on your style of leadership when it comes to running meetings for your team. You will no doubt take into consideration what the current office culture is, what the people above you do in their meetings, and what other experts have advised. You will even have to consider if the culture is predominantly British-style or North American, or Other. This will not only affect the language and phrase choice, but also the overall tone and style of the meetings. For new immigrants and foreign workers, this is especially important to hone in on and adapt to early.

Please be aware that there are many successful managers who run very informal meetings, and some are so informal they resemble a football huddle! That's right – standing in a circle, sharing ideas and inspiration for 5 minutes in the morning! You have to ask yourself what style will work best not only for your company, but also for you personally. What will match your personality and communication strengths best? Always ask yourself “what’s the goal of meetings at this company?” “What are my goals as a manager here?” That is a great place to start. ☺

Thank you for your interest in 3V Communications training.
If you would like to connect, you can find me here:

LI:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/3v-communications-ltd-/>

FB:

<https://www.facebook.com/3VCommunications>

X:

<https://x.com/CommCoach>

YT:

<https://www.youtube.com/@RicPhillips>

IG:

<https://www.instagram.com/coachricphillips/>