How to Conduct Productive Meetings

A workshop at BASF Toastmasters
06 May 2019

Martin Ernst
Agenda

17:45 Meet & Greet
18:00 Welcome!
18:15 Meeting Planning (incl group exercise)
18:30 Opening a Meeting
18:35 Handling a Meeting
18:45 Concluding and Evaluating a Meeting
18:50 Break
19:00 Group Exercise (Leading a meeting)
19:20 Conclusion
19:25 Club Business
Welcome!
Meetings . . .

Here are the minutes from our last meeting: Marty wasted 12 minutes, Janice wasted 7 minutes, Carl wasted 27 minutes, Eileen wasted 9 minutes.
Today’s Topics

- Planning
- Opening a meeting
- Handling a meeting
- Concluding a meeting
- Evaluating

I suppose you’re all wondering why I’ve called you here: Oh, wait, there’s an agenda; never mind!
Begin by . . .

- Stating purpose
- Selecting participants
- Selecting location
- Informing participants
- Developing agenda
Basic types of meetings . . .

- Information-giving,
- Information-taking,
- Problem-solving.

Profits are down, competition is up, and someone is sticking gum under the chairs!
State the Purpose . . .

Define it clearly!

- Our process is extremely efficient
- Yes, but you’re not actually going anywhere!

- to resolve a conflict
- to gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision
- to receive reports from participants
- to reach a decision
- to train
- to discover, analyze or solve a problem
- to gain understanding
- to share information
- to obtain reactions to a problem or situation
Select . . .

. . . participants

. . . location

Real Estate 101

1) Location
2) Location

Not so impressive once you realize they all say “Participant”

Ok, now for the third and final part of today’s lesson . . .
Meeting Planning | How to Conduct Productive Meetings

Inform...

- Purpose and desired outcome
- Expectations of participants (ideas, presentations, etc.)
- Date, time, length
- Special arrangements (meal, beverages, etc.)
- Meeting facilities
- Place, meeting facilities
- Information to be contributed (statistics, reports, etc.)

Agenda
Group exercise

Type and purpose of a meeting

- Find your group with the symbol,
- get together in front of a white board,
- read the scenario and discuss,
- figure out which meeting type is appropriate in this situation,
- write an effective purpose statement,
- 18:20 – 18:25 share with all participants,
- finish on time and listen to the next exciting workshop input from 18:26 on . . .
8 steps for the perfect opening . . .

- friendly atmosphere,
- start on time,
- welcome the group,
- update participants,
- attention getter,
- introduce situation or problem,
- purpose of the meeting,
- establish a method for discussion.
Qualities of meeting leaders . . .

- Poise
- Sensitivity
- Impartiality
- Tact
- A sense of humor
- Good judgment
- Good listening skills
Leading, stimulating, guiding and controlling a discussion . . .

(1) Get everyone participating
Leading, stimulating, guiding and controlling a discussion . . .

(2) Promote an open atmosphere

(3) Summarize

(4) Use transitions

(5) Ask questions
Leading, stimulating, guiding and controlling a discussion . . .

(6) Test possible solutions

(7) Keep the discussion on track

(8) Work for consensus

(9) Plan future action
End positively . . .

Indicate time to conclude  Review the problem briefly  Summarize the progress

Emphasize agreements  Inform of developments  Thank the group
Feedback on your meeting skills...

... yourself

... participants

... an observer
Agenda

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19:00 Group Exercise (Leading a meeting)
19:20 Conclusion
19:25 Club Business
Group exercise

Leadership techniques for a problem solving meeting

- Find your group with the same color,
- sit together inside this room or in spaces,
- the person with the ★ acts as meeting leader,
- get familiar with the topic,

meeting ★ leaders:
- identify the problem,
- analyze the cause of the problem,
- suggest possible solutions,
- evaluate the solution,
- find the best solution.

- participate actively in the meeting // discussion -- each group should find a solution or recommendation about the topic,
- participants: after 10 min complete meeting evaluation form,
- 1 minute for each group to share their experience – present it (person with ★)
“If we want to succeed as a team, we need to put aside our own selfish, individual interests and start doing things my way!”
Toastmaster Meeting **6th May 19**  **Starting at 17:50**  
Meeting Theme **How to conduct productive meetings (workshop)**  
Venue **BASF SE Ludwigshafen**  
Visiting us as an external guest? Use www.basf-toastmasters.com/contact/ to let us know -- we will happily welcome you and prepare a site ID card.

**Meetings** are a vital **communication** tool. They produce **understanding**, eliminate confusion, generate **ideas**, stimulate **action**, clarify goals and objectives, define roles and responsibilities, solve problems, and disseminate information. In many of today's organizations, **decisions** are made in meetings, not by individuals.

On the way to achieve ACG status I will coordinate this **workshop** where you . . .

- learn the basic steps to ensure a productive meeting
- hear about the details to make a meeting efficient
- exercise leadership techniques in conducting a meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17:50</td>
<td>Meet and Greet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome &amp; get together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Presiding Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction, general information, safety advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:05</td>
<td>Educational Session</td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:15</td>
<td>Educational Session</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting Planning, Group Exercise (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>18:35</td>
<td>Educational Session</td>
<td></td>
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<td>19:20</td>
<td>Educational Session</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Exercise (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:25</td>
<td>Presiding Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>End of Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Club business</td>
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**Next Meeting**  **17:45 13th May 19, BASF SE Ludwigshafen**

Presentation slides, the original workbook and the documents of group exercises will be available online from 13 May 2019:  
www.basf-toastmasters.com/downloads
Feedback for the well established gourmet restaurant "The Rotten Tomatoe" has dramatically changed during the last 6 months. Guest's complaints online and offline have significantly increased. The owner decides to hold a meeting with leaders of restaurant staff (service director, chef, commercial manager . . .).

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be __________________________
The general reason for the meeting is ____________

1a Group exercise:

Examples:

... to reach a decision
... to receive reports from participants
... to resolve a conflict
... to gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision
... to train
... to discover, analyze or solve a problem
... to share information
... to obtain reactions to a problem or situation
... to gain understanding
Grandmother will have her 80th birthday in September 2019. So far none of the family nor she herself decided to celebrate. It seems that she herself would like to have the family around as she is still a party girl. Her oldest son decides to take the initiative and meet with his sisters and brothers.

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be ____________________
The general reason for the meeting is ____________

Examples:
- to reach a decision
- to receive reports from participants
- to resolve a conflict
- to gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision
- to train
- to discover, analyze or solve a problem
- to share information
- to obtain reactions to a problem or situation
- to gain understanding
The Easy-Going-Company ordered a new software to record and handle all safety issues. Things are running well and likely the software is ready to use within three months. Nevertheless the roll-out hasn‘t been planned yet. The head of IT-Departement invites the leader of other departements.

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be ________________
The general reason for the meeting is ___________

1c Group exercise:

The Easy-Going-Company ordered a new software to record and handle all safety issues. Things are running well and likely the software is ready to use within three months. Nevertheless the roll-out hasn‘t been planned yet. The head of IT-Departement invites the leader of other departements.

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be ________________
The general reason for the meeting is ___________

- to reach a decision
- to receive reports from participants
- to resolve a conflict
- to gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision
- to train
- to discover, analyze or solve a problem
- to share information
- to obtain reactions to a problem or situation
- to gain understanding
The yearly maintenance and safety report for the locomotive fleet of the Puffing-Along-the-Rails Company has to be written. Contribution of several departments is necessary. The head of asset-management calls his colleagues of other departments for a meeting.

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be __________________________

The general reason for the meeting is ____________

examples

. . . to reach a decision
. . . to receive reports from participants
. . . to resolve a conflict
. . . to gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision
. . . to train
. . . to discover, analyze or solve a problem
. . . to share information
. . . to obtain reactions to a problem or situation
. . . to gain understanding
Yesterday the new manager started to work at the Perfect-Place Company. So far she doesn‘t know much about people and organization in her team. She decides to invite them.

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be ___________________________

The general reason for the meeting is ________________
The Golden-Boots Soccer Club has to nominate players for the next football season. There are more talented players willing to play than positions available in the line-up of the team. Time is limited because in one week the information must be forwarded to the officials. The Club President invites the Club members for an extraordinary meeting.

An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be ____________________

The general reason for the meeting is ____________

examples

. . . to reach a decision
. . . to receive reports from participants
. . . to resolve a conflict
. . . to gain acceptability for an idea, program or decision
. . . to train
. . . to discover, analyze or solve a problem
. . . to share information
. . . to obtain reactions to a problem or situation
. . . to gain understanding
If our Toastmasters club had the opportunity to send one member to appear on a television talk show, what criteria should be used to select the representative?

Meeting leaders follow the problem solving procedure:
- identify the problem,
- analyze the cause of the problem,
- suggest possible solutions,
- evaluate the solution,
- find the best solution.
You are Chief Human Resources Officer of the Safecracker-Bank. During the last year many employees quit their job, interest of potential candidates to work at the company is low. What must be done to make the Safecracker-Bank an attractive employer? Discuss with your colleagues of the top management!

Meeting leaders follow the problem solving procedure:
- identify the problem,
- analyze the cause of the problem,
- suggest possible solutions,
- evaluate the solution,
- find the best solution.
2c Group exercise (leadership techniques for a problem-solving meeting):

What needs to be done to make people eat healthier food?

Meeting leaders follow the problem solving procedure:
- identify the problem,
- analyze the cause of the problem,
- suggest possible solutions,
- evaluate the solution,
- find the best solution.
"How to Conduct Productive Meetings" is a module of Toastmasters International's Success/Leadership Series made possible by the Ralph C. Smedley Memorial Fund.

HOW TO CONDUCT PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Workbook

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HOW TO CONDUCT PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Meetings are a vital communication tool. They produce understanding, eliminate confusion, generate ideas, stimulate action, clarify goals and objectives, define roles and responsibilities, solve problems, and disseminate information. In many of today’s organizations, decisions are made in meetings, not by individuals.

This is your workbook for helping you to lead effective meetings. It contains exercises and information that correspond to the lesson and activities to be presented by your session coordinator. This booklet is yours to keep, so use it for your own personal benefit.

As you listen to the session coordinator, make notes in this booklet about what you hear. Jot down any key points, important concepts, and useful ideas you discover. Make a conscious effort to remember them and make them a part of your everyday life.

When your session leader asks you to do so, do the exercises in the booklet.
EXERCISE 1

(A) The membership of your Toastmasters club has declined in the past year, dropping from 28 members to 15. Only 10 of these members attend meetings regularly. Meeting quality has suffered. The club’s president decides to hold a meeting with the rest of the executive committee. An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be:

(B) Your company has revised its Employee Policy Handbook, especially the areas concerning vacation time, sick leave, and absenteeism policies. The Human Resources Department decides to hold a meeting for all employees about the revisions. An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be:
MEETING PLANNING WORKSHEET

Purpose (Why is a meeting being held? What results do you expect?)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Time (How long will the meeting be? What is the best day/time to hold it?)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Participants (Who should attend?)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Location (Where should the meeting be held?)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Special arrangements (What audiovisual equipment is needed? Will refreshments or meals be served?)


Agenda (What topics should be addressed? How much time should be allotted for each?)


Assignments (Who will be making presentations? Who will give reports? Will you need a secretary to take notes?)


MEETING OPENING CHECKLIST

1. Establish a friendly atmosphere.
2. Start on time.
3. Bring everyone up to date.
4. Open with an attention-getter.
5. Introduce the situation or problem.
6. State the purpose of the meeting.
7. Welcome the group.
8. Establish a method for discussion.
DISCUSSION TIPS

Following are some ideas for leading, stimulating, guiding, and controlling group discussion:

- Get everyone participating
  - State your need for ideas
  - Invite cooperation
  - Seek the unique resources of participants
  - Call on someone
  - Compliment someone
- Promote an open atmosphere
- Summarize
- Use transitions
- Ask questions
  - To guide the course of discussion
  - To clarify thinking
  - To reach agreements
  - To involve quiet participants
  - To obtain information
  - To limit or end discussion
- Test possible solutions
- Keep the discussion on track
- Work for consensus
- Plan future action
END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

1. Indicate time to conclude.
2. Review the problem briefly.
3. Summarize the progress made.
5. Inform of developments.
6. Thank the group.

EXERCISE 2

You and the others in your group are to hold a meeting to discuss one of the topics below, or one that will be given to you by the coordinator. One will be assigned to serve as meeting leader; the others will be meeting participants. The meeting leader will lead the meeting using the procedures and techniques discussed today. The group is to formulate a solution or recommendation about the topic in 10 minutes. Each of you will then complete the meeting evaluation form on the following page. Then one of the group will be asked to give a one-minute report on the group’s meeting.

Topics

a. How can we attract new members for our Toastmasters club?
b. What can be done to improve our Toastmasters club?
c. If our Toastmasters club had the opportunity to send one member to appear on a television talk show, what criteria should be used to select that representative?
d. What can we do to increase our children’s reading skills?
e. What can we do to reduce graffiti in our community?
f. What new laws should be established concerning violent crime?
MEETING EVALUATION
FOR EXERCISE 2

Circle the number that best describes how well the leader performed.

The leader made participants feel welcome and comfortable.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader clearly explained the problem or situation to be discussed.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader selected a discussion method and explained it to participants.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader was able to effectively initiate discussion.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader appeared confident and poised.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader encouraged everyone to participate.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader used body movements and facial expressions that indicated receptivity.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader frequently summarized the discussion to keep it organized.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader asked questions to guide the discussion.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader asked questions to clarify someone's comments or suggestions.
1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH
The leader tried to involve quiet participants.

1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader kept the discussion on track.

1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader worked for consensus on decisions.

1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader was tactful.

1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader was able to guide the group to a conclusion or solution.

1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH

The leader closed the meeting using the six-step method.

1 2 3 4 5
LOW HIGH
MEETING EVALUATION

Following is an evaluation form you can use to obtain feedback on meetings you conduct.

1. Objectives of the meeting were:
   1  2  3  4  5
   UNCLEAR  CLEAR

2. Time utilization was:
   1  2  3  4  5
   INEFFECTIVE  EFFECTIVE

3. Exchange of views was:
   1  2  3  4  5
   NOT OPEN  OPEN

4. All participants had a chance to express opinions.
   1  2  3  4  5
   NO  YES

5. The discussion:
   1  2  3  4  5
   DIGRESSED  STAYED ON TRACK

6. Final decisions were:
   1  2  3  4  5
   UNCLEAR  CLEAR

7. The meeting leader was:
   1  2  3  4  5
   INEFFECTIVE  EFFECTIVE

8. The meeting environment was:
   1  2  3  4  5
   UNFRIENDLY  FRIENDLY

Comments or suggestions:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
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