

Special Report

“Effective Meeting Management”

Stop Wasting Time,
Get (More) Things Done, and
Meet (More) Effectively



The “secret” to an effective meeting is that there is not one secret; there are actually 10 of them.

Once you know the 10 things to do before, during and after every meeting, you’ll stop wasting time, get more of the right things done and meet much more effectively.

CAUTION: This guidebook is applicable to Work Meetings, Life Meetings, Political Meetings...even meetings where you’re talking about an upcoming Meeting!

If you’re going to talk with anyone, about anything...do these 10 things.

1. 48-36 hours ahead of time...promote the purpose.
2. Arrive to the room early; 5, 10 or 15 minutes early.
3. Start with the end in mind.
4. Check in at the 30th minute.
5. EOT: End on Time; every time.
6. Ensure everyone is clear on their M.I.N.S.
7. Ask the SINGLE most important question.
8. Leave the room as clean (or cleaner) than you found it.
9. Email, call or write to facilities management.
10. Follow up to say thank you; acknowledge success.



48-36 hours ahead of time...promote the purpose.

2 days ahead of time...

Notice that I don't start this report by asking "Do you need to meet in the first place?" That's *another* report...here, I assume you're meeting. I also assume that you're at least somewhat in charge; meaning, you can send a message to everyone attending the meeting, and they might actually open the email!

There are three things I send to everyone I'm meeting with in 2 days:

P: Purpose

If the original meeting invite had a "purpose statement," I copy and paste that into a message. On the other hand, if the entire team is not 100% sure WHY they're meeting (and, you'll be able to intuit if this is true), I write up a 100-150 word Purpose of the meeting. They can read it in about a minute.

A: Agenda

Under the Purpose Statement ("Why, again, are we meeting?") I add any line items that I know will require a bit of discussion. Generally these are "Nouns" (topics), the things that we need to talk about. And, next to each topic, I add a subjective time limit.

L: Limit

If we're meeting for 60 minutes, and we are getting together to talk about 7 things, I work (diligently) to identify "about how long" we'll discuss each topic. Oh, I always cut *that* timing short by about 25% of the total meeting time. If we're meeting for 60 minutes, I know we'll need about 15 minutes at the end to capture M.I.N.S. (Most Important Next Steps) and close the meeting.



Arrive to the room early; 5, 10 or 15 minutes early.

Be the one known as “on time”

I had a boss who said, “If you’re on time, you’re late; if you’re early, you’re on time.” Whether the staff agreed with him or not, we knew the guidelines. As a result, for a 3pm meeting, I was in the room early.

What would you have done?

Arrive 15 minutes early.

So, you’re the one running the meeting, are you? Well, I highly suggest you create your day so you can arrive to the room 15 minutes early. (One trick I use: Start the meeting on the :15; it gives you a chance to finish the last meeting, and get to the room!) Take those precious 900 seconds and make sure you have what you need. Or, simply pause long enough to reset from a hectic-busy day.

Arrive 10 minutes early.

If it’s a big enough group, someone else will arrive about 10 minutes early. No matter your position, whether you’re “an invited guest” or you’re in charge of the whole thing, be sure to meet the people who are 10 minutes early. As you’re talking, ask yourself, “Why are they here early?”

Arrive 5 minutes early.

You were invited, and you really aren’t 100% sure you need to be in the room...but, you’re there with 300 seconds to spare. Look around the room, glance through the agenda/workbook, introduce yourself to someone you don’t know, and talk about something with someone you DO know. Take advantage of this little bit of time to acquaint yourself with the group/room/topic.



Start with the end in mind.

I didn't make this one up

Have you ever read that book, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”? Well, Dr. Covey talked about this as a signature habit of, well, effective people. With as much research as he did, and as many people who have bought into his methods (he sold 15 million copies of the book!) it makes sense, then, to begin every MEETING with the end in mind.

What will we know?

Every meeting I get invited to, I force myself through a “Benjamin Franklin-inspired” activity. On a piece of paper, I draw a line down the middle of the page. On top of the left column I write: “Things I know about this meeting.” On the other side I write, “Things I imagine knowing AFTER this meeting.”

Generally, this takes me *about* 90 seconds. Whenever I do it, I always come up with at least SOMETHING to look for during the meeting; something that may NOT have been mentioned in the original agenda.

What will we do?

Ok, this is SUPER-duper important. Really, it IS! Look, if you can stop, pull out a piece of paper from your notebook or start a text document and write a list of things you need to do about, for and after the meeting...

...you don't need to go to the meeting! So, give yourself this “Get out of jail free card” opportunity. Take yourself to task. Give yourself the gift of your attention. Write down what you THINK you're going to walk away with as tasks, and you'll know (shhhhhhh) whether or not you need to go to that meeting or not!



Check in at the 30th minute.

This is relative; it just means “the halfway mark”

You’ve been here before

The meeting started a few minutes late (someone “important” ended their *last* meeting late...you know how it goes) and before you know it, you are left with 12 minutes to go, BUT you have only addressed items 1 and 2 from the (7 item!) agenda.

Start on time.

I know this is hard; so, account for it. In the invite to the 9am meeting, put in the agenda that the “actual” meeting/discussion/presentation will begin at 9:10am. Then, start...then.

Stop at the halfway mark.

I generally set a timer for “half” of the meeting. So, if it’s a 60 minute meeting, I’ll start this timer at the beginning of the meeting, so everyone can see it on my laptop: <http://www.e.ggtimer.com/30minutes>

When we get “halfway done” with our meeting TIME, I raise my hand, stop the meeting and ask, “Are we about halfway done?” I’ve had this ONE tactic force the participants to review and renew the agenda, and make more progress faster; I think it’s because I asked them to be accountable to the clock.

29 minutes 58 seconds



EOT: End on Time; every time.

People trust people who keep agreements

Think back to the last meeting someone invited you to. As soon as you saw who the invitation was from, and how long it was scheduled for, what was your FIRST thought?

- Oh boy, this is going to be great, an effective meeting.
- There's NO WAY we're going to start and end on time.

It was one or the other.

Look, you either enjoy working with who you're going to meet with, or not. You know the meeting leaders who create momentum, and the ones who don't. The BEST thing you can do to build your team is to keep agreements; and, this starts with "Start and End Times."

How important is ending on time?

Over the past 12 years, I've presented more than 1,400 on-site workshops for companies around the world. Yup, I get on a plane, check into a hotel, and the next morning I show up on-site...on time.

Before I start the seminar I always check with the coordinator, "What time does the group of executives I'm working with think we're finishing today?" I ask. If they say, "We told them you'd be done by 4pm," you want to know what time I end the workshop???



Ensure everyone is clear on their M.I.N.S.

M.I.N.S. = Most Important Next Steps

Ever been in a meeting, and had someone look at you and say, “Oh yeah, I’ll get that to you right away,” and then noticed that they didn’t write anything down as a reminder?

I tell you, I’m all for a good memory and all...BUT, when it comes to doing the most important next steps, I’m not going to “hope” my way there. It’s important that everyone in the meeting have a place to write things down (on paper, in their notebook, in their smartphone, on their computer) DURING the meeting.

The actions “I’m going to take.”

Do yourself a favor, over the course of the next 5 meetings, keep a VERY strict watch on the “verbs” you say you’ll do. For most of my clients it’s possible to get that list to 5, 7 or 9 verbs. Then, during each meeting, they actually make lists based on the “kinds” of work they’re going to do.

Want some examples? Here are three of mine: “Review, Call, Draft...”

The actions “They said they’d take.”

There are two instances when I write down what “you said you’d do.”

1. When you say you’ll do something.
2. When you say, “I could do that, I guess.”

Oh, and if I don’t see you write something down? Well, expect an email from me later in the day...I’ll remind you.



Ask the **SINGLE** most important question.

Before you read on, what IS it?

What would you say the SINGLE most important question is as you end a meeting? In fact, I'm curious, stop reading and email me right now... In return, I'll send you something special: Jason@WomackCompany.com

Ok, I've been in a lot of meetings, I've led hundreds, and I've written about effective meeting management for years. I would say the SINGLE most important question to ask is...

Well, before I share mine, what have you heard?

I'm sure you're already thinking of what this SO important question could be. And, I'm also sure...you're right! What follows is just my opinion; but, you bought this book, and you're willing to read it, so here goes...

What did we NOT address?

This is a "multi-edge" sword. Not just double edge. You see, whenever I ask this question, the people around the room look at me and I know what's on everyone's mind...

"What did we not talk about?"

The key here is to listen, and get the participants to talk as much as possible. I write down EVERY thing that they say... You see, that's all content for a (potential) next meeting.



Leave the room as clean (or cleaner) than you found it.

Yeah, I'm totally serious

My mentor, a former boss, Jack Smith taught me this one. He was the principal at the high school I taught at in Ojai, California. I remember, clearly, before the school year even started back in 1996, I attended a “faculty and staff meeting” in the school library.

At the end of the meeting, it was my first one as a faculty member at that school, I followed along as the herd left the building. Halfway to my car, I realized I'd left my jacket in the room, turned around, and walked back to get it. Woah, what a lesson I was in for...

He became Mr. Smith for the next 4 years.

There he was, with the librarian, the school secretary, and a few other “old-timers.” You know what they were doing? Pushing in the chairs, picking up bits of paper from the floor, and straightening the tables after the staff had left. I looked around, made eye contact with Mr. Smith, and started helping myself.

DO sweat the small stuff.

So, now I run around the world. I sit in meetings, I lead meetings, and I come into rooms just after meetings have ended...you know, try it out. For the next 5 meetings you go to, just clean up after you leave. Not for the boss, not for the team, not for your clients...just for you.

Oh, let me know what happens, I'd love to hear!



Email, call or write to facilities management.

What if you knew who worked so hard so you could make things happen?

“We’re all alone...together”

I had another mentor of mine tell me this, many years ago. If you’re reading this booklet at work, take a look around. Look at your desk; under your desk; past your desk; look down the hall.

Next time you walk into a conference or meeting room, look around.

Wow.

I don’t know about you, but I’m in awe. It all just seems to work. There are pens there to write with, the lights turn on, and (every now and then) there is a meal to eat!

Thank you.

I know, I know, I’m an “outside guy” most of the time. I come in, I lead a workshop, I create new discussions, I (often) shake things up, and then...well, and then I drive away.

But, before I leave the building, I find - I always find - someone who’s a part of making that building “work” to say *thank you* to. I’ve got some amazing stories I’ve collected over the years. If you ever have time for a great story, give me a call and we’ll talk about Bill... The janitor I met while working in Cleveland, Ohio.

My office line is: 805-640-6401



Follow up to say thank you; acknowledge success.

Let the team know how things are going

You know that meeting you went to yesterday? Well, someone else on the team is wondering about it as well...

The “FYI” email

Within 12-24 hours of “most” meetings (and by “most” I do mean “all”), I send a note out to everyone who attended...

I put everyone’s name in the CC: field (‘cause I don’t expect a response). Then, in the body of the message I write a 2-5 bullet-point review/recap of the meeting/discussion. There in that correspondence I’m looking to notice the A.A.A.’s of a productive meeting.

Acknowledgment: Thank you’s to specific team members.

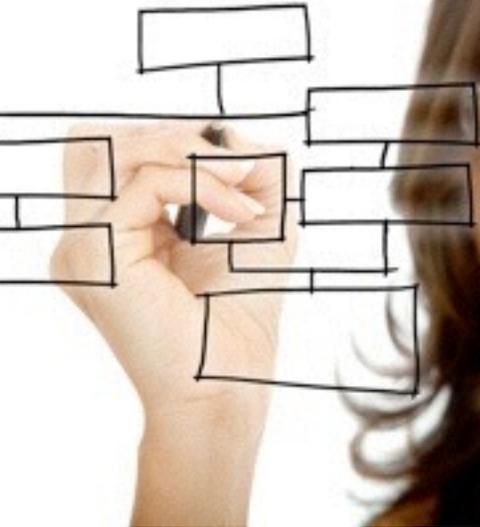
Accomplishment: A statement of what I see we got done.

Appreciation: Something (in general) I appreciate about the process.

Consider going back to the “Table of Contents,” of this booklet and identify just a few of the Top 10 ideas YOU want to experiment with this week. And, good luck in your next meetings!



BUSINESS PLAN



THE WORLD'S MOST EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY COACHING PROGRAM

Imagine if instead of waiting until “later,” you started working on building GREAT answers to these four questions. Imagine if you surrounded yourself with people, *and* information, *and* exercises that put you in a position to answer those questions, and live those answers.

By now, I hope you can see the importance of a solid community. The Get Momentum community is here to help you achieve the life you want.

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