

Effective team meetings

In order to get meaningful work done together, a team will need to meet regularly – either face-to-face or virtually. Schedule team meetings early in the term so that everyone can avoid conflicts with other commitments. It is wise to schedule more meetings than you anticipate that you may need – it is easier to cancel a meeting than to schedule an additional one.

There are **three focus areas** that will make your team meetings effective, efficient and productive.



1. Prepare

- a. Ensure that there is a clear **purpose** for the meeting and that it is communicated to all the team members.
- b. Set an **agenda**. The team can develop the agenda together in a shared document with open access to all team members so that everyone knows what to expect during the meeting and can prepare accordingly.
- c. Identify the **pre-meeting tasks**: any necessary research, reading or other tasks that are critical to the success of the meeting.
- d. Clarify the **technology** that will be used to support the team meeting. Ensure that everyone is ready, equipped and confident to use the platform.

2. Conduct

- a. Decide on certain **roles** that team members can assume for the meeting. These can be rotated over the course of a term and include:
 - i. **Facilitator** – responsible for setting expectations, keeping the discussion on track with guidance from the agenda, time keeping, assuring that all voices are heard and maintaining a respectful working environment.
 - ii. **Note-taker** – responsible for capturing the topics discussed, decisions made and action steps. This can be done on a whiteboard, flip chart or by means of meeting minutes.
 - iii. Keep in mind that **all team members** are responsible for ideas contribution and content development.
- b. Set up or revisit meeting **ground rules**:
 - i. Communication (e.g. listening, not talking over each other, tone, volume)

- ii. Being open to different perspectives
- iii. Remaining non-judgemental
- iv. Seeking clarification as needed
- c. Agree on a **decision-making process**, for example, SUIT.
- d. Take **energy breaks** to get some fresh air, stretch, have a snack or diffuse tension.
- e. **Clarify** what tasks need to get done to move the team assignment forward. Team members can decide who is going to do which specific tasks, by what specific deadline. **Update the team's work plan.**
- f. **Summarize** progress as well as the pertinent decisions and ensure everyone is in agreement.
- g. Confirm the **next meeting** (date, time and venue), if needed.

3. Follow up

- a. Drive team assignments ahead by following through on commitments. Every team member needs to take **personal responsibility** for the documented decisions and timelines.
- b. As a team, make sure that all members have the materials required to fulfill their commitments. This is an opportunity to offer or request appropriate **support** from the team.



References

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