

## What? A Meeting Agenda?

If you're like most team members, you attend meetings on a regular basis...and without an agenda. The cost of meetings is too high not to make them as effective as possible. A key element in making meetings effective is having an agenda.

The agenda provides a roadmap to success because it indicates where the meeting is going. It states the purpose and expected results – what needs to be accomplished during the meeting.

To create an agenda, be sure to:

- Generate possible agenda items. Consider brainstorming possible agenda items via email, voice mail, or in teams. Be sure to include all team members, key stakeholders, and other necessary people.
- Verify that all items on the agenda are appropriate and related to the purpose and expected results for the meeting. If an item doesn't relate, remove it as an agenda item. Save it for a different meeting.
- Keep the meeting focused. Trying to do too much at a meeting will reduce the meeting's quality and productivity. It will also frustrate team members. In fact, if you find that there are outstanding issues or team needs, consider several different meetings, especially if they require different team members' input and presence.
- Prioritize the agenda items to make sure the most important issues are discussed first.
- Set approximate time limits for discussion on each agenda item based on its complexity and relative importance to the purpose and expected results of the meeting. Make sure the most important items get the most time.

Susan Stasiak in her article, *Meetings: How to Waste Less Time and Get More Done*, suggests anticipating possible glitches or hot issues that may generate discussion or debate, and plan for a reasonable time allotment.

Don't set approximate time limits for discussion on specific agenda items as they come up for consideration **during** the meeting. If this happens:

- Priority items might not be covered sufficiently.
- Time may be wasted discussing less critical issues.
- The meeting might run too long.

“Most poor meetings are poorly planned,” according Stasiak, so one of the most important things we can do is plan for the meeting.

(For more information on creating effective meetings, check out *Meetings: A Roadmap to Success* eWorkbook at [www.Self-StudyCourse.com](http://www.Self-StudyCourse.com).)

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