

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Making the Most of Your Meetings

Why is it that people dread office or team meetings? Meetings are supposed to be a place where important news can be communicated, problems can be solved, ideas can be brought to life and opinions can be shared. Meetings can foster a sense of open communication at work and help employees feel like they are a part of a team. So how come something meant to be positive sometimes ends up being negative? There are some mistakes leaders can easily make when it comes to organizing or running a staff meeting. In this article we'll briefly address do's and don'ts for office meetings. Hopefully some of these tips can help make your meeting a success.

Characteristics of a Bad Meeting

- Do not have a meeting when it's not needed. If the information is basic and can simply be relayed by a memo or e-mail, try that instead.
- Do not forget to have a plan. Some people do not want to appear rigid by providing structure to the meeting, but structure is very important. It helps employees to have an idea of what to expect. Knowledge about the meeting purpose can also help to negate rumors generated from uncertainty.
- Do not have a meeting purely for the purpose of giving a sense that something is being accomplished. This can take away from the productivity of your employees and their time may be better spent elsewhere. If there is nothing new to be addressed, keep it short or do not have the meeting at all.

Characteristics of a Good Meeting

- First off, gather the basics. Consider what the meeting should accomplish, who needs to attend, what should be discussed, and when would be the most convenient place and time.
- Use your opening remarks to set the tone. Briefly let people know the purpose of the meeting and review the agenda and what you are trying to achieve.
- Help people contribute effectively. Encourage more quiet employees by praising their expertise and good ideas. Limit long-winded speakers by redirecting them to the point at hand when discussion becomes off topic. Another approach is to have employees write their ideas or contributions down. This way everyone can share his or her ideas or concerns.

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