

## **Meetings – they can be productive!**

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### **Problem.**

**Think about how much time we spend in meetings.**

**Think about our perception of them.**

**Think about what they do for motivation. What are we doing about it?**

We would not send a team out to compete, if members did not know their roles, the rules, strategy and were fit. Training would have been given beforehand, but we rarely spend money or time on training our staff to be more effective in meetings.

It is almost as if the activity is deemed to be little more than turning up and sitting around the table for a conversation. Companies might think twice about them, if they realised how wasteful meetings can be, in terms of time, opportunity cost and impact upon morale.

### **Solution.**

**Visualise meetings as an opportunity to develop staff and to motivate the organisation.**

**Invest in training staff so that meetings are effective, whether the role is as a member or chairperson.**

**Train staff collectively, so that those attending meetings share the same values about their ethos, procedures and processes.**

Investment in making meetings more efficient would easily be repaid on the bottom line, if the result is focused decision-making, quality discussion, staff development and motivation and using financial and time resources effectively.

We have a love-hate attitude towards meetings. We view them as wasted time and opportunities missed. On the other hand, they can be a useful means of cementing relationships and creating a group ethos within an organisation.

When properly organised and conducted, meetings are an effective means of bringing people together, to share opinions, inform each other, discuss issues and make decisions. Even in the age of video-conferencing, email and mobile phone, we have not yet found an alternative to the meeting, where opportunities exist to have physical proximity to colleagues and clients.

We may criticise a meeting because it has been poorly chaired; a fair point, but equally, members have a responsibility to ensure that they participate in a constructive manner.

### **The role of the chair.**

To ensure all viewpoints are expressed.

To ensure that the agenda is tightly followed.

To clarify what has been decided and the further action that is required.

To encourage wider thinking when a problem cannot be resolved.

To use meetings as a vehicle for developing and motivating colleagues.

Being a good role model to others.

Aim to obtain quality collective outcomes, so that members leave the meeting knowing that it has been purposeful.

### **The role of the member**

Not to rehearse previous positions which are known to others.

Not to introduce irrelevant points.

To display active listening skills and appropriate body language.

To view meetings as opportunities to develop discussion and presentation skills.

Be on time.

Take opportunities to support colleagues or constructively give a critique.

When making a contribution, to make one point at a time. This provides clarity for the listener.