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# Team Meetings

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## Team Meetings

This step shows you how to run high-performance team meetings, their format, their protocols, the concept of shared leadership and how to tell if your meetings are being effective. High-performance leadership means holding meetings that team members want to attend because they are productive, and efficiently make use of the team members' time. Every meeting is focused, timely, and necessary, and is used to solve problems, make decisions, disseminate information, and enhance team member skills. These things make for a much better meeting experience.

The high-performance team meeting forms a crucial part of the team-building process.

One of the most common complaints voiced by members of low-performing teams is that too much time is spent in meetings. The real issue is not the time but the content of meetings. High-Performance meetings on the other hand address only those topics that need the team's collective, cross-boundary expertise, such as corporate strategy, enterprise-resource allocation, or how to capture synergies across business units. They need to steer clear of anything that can be handled by individual businesses or functions, not only to use the team's time well but to also foster a sense of purpose.

### How to run a high-performance team meeting

High-Performance meetings are one's people want to attend because they stick to specific content and are largely unstructured, meaning that they do not use a formal Agenda or Minutes. (A High-Performance team does not need to minute or track an individual's actions as accepting an action is the same as making a commitment; therefore, there is no need for follow up.) Contributions need to be focussed on specific content, for example this content suits most situations:

- Corporate strategy.
- Enterprise-resource allocation.
- Business unit synergies.
- Customer satisfaction pains and gains.
- Staff satisfaction levels.
- Service Delivery.
- Strategic initiatives such as major projects.
- Resolution of disagreements.

### 1. Meeting format.

- Each team member talks in turn to their items but only from a perspective of telling the other team members things they 'need to know'.
- Questions are then asked, answers are given and discussed by all.
- Finally, actions are agreed and are noted by the team member who has taken the action.
- Then the next team member talks until everyone except the manager has had a turn.
- The last action is by the manager, who delegates tasks they have previously noted down - recording to whom and when the task was given but not when it is due.
- Unless a task must be given to a specific team member, the manager asks for volunteers to take on a task. (High-performance team members do not just action or take on tasks that relate to their management discipline or field or expertise, rather they take on any task. Doing this extends their management abilities, their subject matter knowledge and helps them to understand the management accountabilities of their peers. It also goes a long way towards preparing them for more generalised management roles and future leadership positions.)
- Team members understand that the managers tasks have a high priority and are to be actioned asap.

### 2. Meeting protocols.

- Encourage quiet or introverted team members to give an opinion.
- Ensure team members do not speak over or interrupt others.
- Expect that team members will be truthful.
- Encourage views on the team's effectiveness.
- Encourage team members to critique each other's ideas and comments, rather than criticise the individual. (This is the approach of never criticising a team member but rather critiquing an idea, comment, process, or method they are using or are proposing. This is best done during meetings where ideas are being flown around by team members by having them comment on the relevance and likely success or failure of an idea.)
- When a negative event (problem, error, or failure) occurs, blame is never assigned to an individual, rather an autopsy of the event is discussed/carried out to work out how it happened and more importantly, how to avoid it happening again. The same applies to successes, there should be a discussion/autopsy about the actions that led to the success along with follow-up steps on how to repeat those actions in the future. e.g., By updating a process document.

### 3. Shared leadership.

Shared leadership is when the manager shares their decision-making rights with all team members by promoting the interests of the team members and by practicing social equality. Sharing leadership calls for a great deal of personal initiative from individual team members and is a vital quality of high-performance leadership. Shared leadership invigorates the team members to deliver exceptional outcomes in the workplace and achieve synergies in their results by working collaboratively with all team members.

During the meeting the manager remains as silent as possible, allowing the team members to jointly make decisions and agree actions thereby sharing the team leadership. Another aspect of shared leadership is when the team leadership role is taken up by various team members, according to need at the time. An example of this is the leadership of a major or strategic activity where one team member is a subject matter expert and will lead the team (including the manager) much as a project manager would.

### 4. How to tell if your meetings are working.

If your meetings are working well, and a collective consciousness is developing, then team members will exhibit several defining characteristics.

- There is a sense of real energy being released during the meeting.
- Everyone on the team talks and listens in roughly equal measure, keeping contributions short and sweet.
- Team members face one another, and their conversations and gestures are energetic.
- Team members connect directly with one another, not just with the manager.
- Team members carry on back-channel or side conversations within the team.
- Team members periodically break, go exploring outside the team, and bring information back.

### 5. Meeting tips.

- Do not wait for all team members to arrive before starting the meeting, always start exactly on time.
- Do not allow war stories or discussions that don't add value.
- Ban the use of laptops, they are distracting and severely limit the amount of information that the laptop user takes in. Multiple studies have proven that manual note taking is far more effective in terms of remembering and analysing

new information compared to the laptop user due to different cognitive processes being used between the two.

- For a short, sharp meeting, consider standing rather than sitting. Psychologically this makes team members more focussed and more spartan with their involvement and saves considerable time. This approach works equally well for face to face and virtual meetings.

### 6. Decision register.

An optional decision register can be used to record decisions which otherwise may get lost or forgotten. Another option is to take the approach that every decision has an 'owner', and it is the owner's accountability to ensure that appropriate documentation is updated, and that communication of the decision is carried out.

"Shared leadership sustains high performance in teams." Source: Qualities of High-Performance Teams– Katzenbach and Smith -August 4, 2018

## Summary

1. **High-performance meetings.** - One of the most common complaints voiced by members of low-performing teams is that too much time is spent in meetings. The real issue is not the time but the content of meetings. High-performance meetings address only those topics that need the team's collective, cross-boundary expertise, such as corporate strategy or enterprise-resource allocation.
2. **How to run a high-performance team meeting.** - High-performance meetings are one's people want to attend because they stick to specific content and are largely unstructured, meaning that they do not use a formal Agenda or Minutes. (A High-performance team does not need to minute an individual's actions as accepting an action is the same as making a commitment.)
3. **Meeting format.** - Each team member talks in turn to their content items but only from a perspective of telling the other team members things they 'need' to know. Questions are then asked, answers are given and discussed by all. Finally, actions are agreed and are noted by the team member who has taken the action. Then the next team member talks until everyone except the manager has had a turn.
4. **Meeting protocols.** - Quiet or introverted team members are to be encouraged to give an opinion. Ensure team members do not speak over or interrupt others. Expect that team members will be truthful. Encourage views on the team's effectiveness. Encourage team members to critique each other's ideas and comments, rather than criticise the individual. (This is the approach of never criticising a team member but instead critiquing an underlying process.

5. **Shared Leadership.** - Shared leadership is when the manager shares their decision-making rights with all team members by promoting the interests of the team members and by practicing social equality. Sharing leadership calls for a great deal of personal initiative from individual team members and is vital quality of a high-performance leadership. Shared leadership invigorates the team members to deliver exceptional outcomes in the workplace and achieve synergies in their results by working collaboratively with all team members.
6. **How to tell if your meetings are working.** - If your meetings are working well, and a collective consciousness is developing, then team members will exhibit several defining characteristics. There is a sense of real energy being released during the meeting. Everyone on the team talks and listens in roughly equal measure, keeping contributions short and sweet.
7. **Meeting tips.** - Do not wait for all team members to arrive before starting the meeting, always start exactly on time. Do not allow war stories or discussions that don't add value. Ban the use of laptops, they are distracting and severely limit the amount of information that the laptop user takes in. Multiple studies have proven that manual note taking is far more effective
8. **Decision Register.** - An optional decision register can be used to record decisions which otherwise may get lost or forgotten. Another option is to take the approach that every decision has an 'owner' and it is the owners accountability to ensure that appropriate documentation is updated and that communication of the decision is carried out.

<p><b>Team Meetings Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>1.0 hour</b></p>
<p>Arrange a team workshop.</p>	
<p>Create a workshop handout.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Copy the notes from the Team Meetings step and use as a Handout.</li> <li>2. There is nothing wrong with using the notes verbatim.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Open Workshop</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Open the workshop by advising that you are proposing to change the format of the team meetings, in line with high-performance standards.</li> <li>4. Have the team read the Handout.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>New Standing Agenda.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Discuss the suggested content of the new standing agenda. Modify it as required but aim to retain the key elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate strategy.</li> <li>• Enterprise-resource allocation.</li> <li>• Business unit synergies.</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction pains and gains.</li> <li>• Staff satisfaction pains and gains.</li> <li>• Service Delivery.</li> <li>• Strategic initiatives/major projects.</li> <li>• Resolution of disagreements.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
<p><b>Meeting format.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Advise the team that the format of the meeting has changed. Each team member will now talk in turn to the agenda content, questions will be asked and answered, actions will be noted and then the next person will talk.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Meeting protocols.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Advise the team that all team members are expected to voice opinions, that interruptions are unprofessional and therefore are to be avoided, blame for a failure will never be assigned, rather an autopsy of both negative and positive events will be carried out in its place.</li> <li>8. Advise the team that the meeting will start exactly on time, war stories that don't add value are not permitted and that a pen and paper is to be used in place of laptops.</li> </ol>	

## Management Guide

<p><b>Shared Leadership.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>9. Advise the team that your expectation is now that the team will share leadership by having the team collaboratively agree on all decisions.</li><li>10. During the meeting you, as manager will aim to remain as silent as is reasonably possible, allowing the team members instead to jointly make decisions and agree actions - thereby sharing the team leadership.</li></ol>	
<p><b>Decision Register.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. Advise that for important decisions a Decision Register can be used to record decisions which otherwise may get lost or forgotten.</li><li>12. Decisions need to be recorded elsewhere for practical purposes.</li></ol>	
<p><b>Close the workshop.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>13. Ask for any questions or if anything needs to be clarified.</li><li>14. Arrange for a copy of the team rules to be made accessible to everyone.</li><li>15. State that the new practices are applicable from now.</li></ol>	

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