

DISCOVER  STRENGTH



7 Steps to Running an Engaging Meeting

Great decisions are foundational to building a great company and effective meetings are where these decisions are made.

Ultimately, it's nearly impossible to build a great company without effective meetings.

At the same time, most people dread meetings and default to the assumption that meetings are inherently bad or boring.

This doesn't have to be the case.

In fact, done properly, meetings can be the most important and even enjoyable part of our week. More importantly, instating an effective and productive meeting cadence and structure might be the single greatest growth factor in business.

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1. **Same time; same day. Start on time; end on time.** Schedule a 90-minute meeting for your team, once per week. Hold the meeting on the same day and time and start the meeting exactly on time and end on time. This will allow your team members to plan their schedules and work around the meeting. Your team should build their calendars around the meeting; not the other way around. If someone is on vacation and is going to miss the meeting, don't reschedule the meeting- the show should go on without that team member.
2. **Segue.** Start the meeting by sharing both a professional and a personal highlight of the week. This transition to the start of the meeting creates a mental segue from the day-to-day whirlwind of our jobs into the meeting itself. It also allows us to start the meeting by hearing the positivity our teammates have experienced over the last week.
3. **Review KPIs.** Spend 5-10 minutes looking at the 6-15 leading and lagging indicators that give you an objective pulse on the performance of your business. If one of these numbers is "off track" for more than one week, put it on your Issues List (see #5 below).
4. **Headlines.** Next, spend 5-10 minutes sharing customer and employee headlines. Come prepared with these headlines (capture them on a Google sheet that the team can add to all week long). This allows the entire team to get up to speed on what is going on with our people (customers and staff). Keep these headlines brief (no discussion here).

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5. **IDS (Identify, Discuss, Solve).** Spend 45-60 minutes of your meeting focused on processing issues. This is the magic of the meeting. To start, spend your week putting issues on the "Issues List"; ideally, a shared document that the whole team has access to. An issue can be an idea, an opportunity, or a problem that really needs to be solved. Instead of emailing the whole team or making a phone call, simply drop the issue on the issues list and focus on solving it during your next meeting. The issues list is a holding place for all of your team's issues. During the meeting, the whole team should look at the issues list (probably between 10-25 issues) and determine the 3 most important issues the team is facing and then solve these 3 issues in order of importance. Identify what the real issue is. Discuss and engage in debate. Move toward a Solve. When these 3 are solved, pick 3 more. Continue this process until your IDS time block is completed. Save the rest of the issues for the next meeting. As long as you are solving issues in order of importance, this will always be time well spent. And remember, it's normal to have issues. Your job is to smoke them out, solve them, and make them go away forever.
6. A **"solved" issue should have a written "to-do" that one person has to own.** Each issue may end up with multiple to-dos. Each to-do should be written as a 7-day action step and should be checked in on next week.

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7. Enter the danger. The mark of great meetings is the same as great movies or books, conflict. The team should passionately discuss and debate the key issues that the organization is facing. Conflict is good as long as it is ideological (as opposed to interpersonal). The healthiest teams are able to engage in conflict and that conflict leads to better decisions and commitment to these decisions. 6. A “solved” issue should have a written “to-do” that one person has to own. Each issue may end up with multiple to-dos. Each to-do should be written as a 7-day action step and should be checked in on next week.

**With these 7 Steps, you
are ready to run an
engaging and
effective meeting.**