

SIX STEPS FOR CREATING TEAM MEETING AGENDAS

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Meetings are a way of life for teams. Many organizations that adopt a team-concept as the major driver for producing commitment and results discover that well planned meetings are an effective antidote to an awful organization malady I call "meeting-itis" -- a condition brought on by the need for having meetings to get things done, but a lack of adequate planning so that meetings work **on** you instead of **for** you. Here are six steps for creating team meeting agendas that will help inoculate your team against meeting-itis and produce better team results.

STEP 1. Survey all those who will be affected by the meeting to discover their issues and concerns.

STEP 2. Translate issues and concerns into agenda topics. Put them in logical or priority order.

STEP 3. Define what each agenda topic means by including the essential information necessary for participants to understand what they will be dealing with. Indicate any information that participants should bring with them to the meeting for maximum effective use of time.

STEP 4. Indicate if the agenda item is:

- a. **For information only.** (Can this item be handled without taking the time for a meeting? If no, indicate the item is principally for information transfer, but may require clarification, Q&A, etc., in the meeting.)
- b. **For discussion only.** (Provide enough advance information about the item to participants so their discussion and input can be well-informed and thoughtful.)
- c. **For discussion and decision.** (Provide information as in discussion process above, indicate any deadlines by which the decision must be made and implemented, and flag any obstacles that can be anticipated which might impede decision-making.)

STEP 5. Assign time values to each agenda item to guide the progress of the team's discussion.

STEP 6. Indicate the means by which the meeting's outcomes will be recorded (e.g. minutes, notes, etc.) for follow-through purposes. This lets participants know how they will find out about results if they are prevented from attending the meeting.

It is recommended that meeting leaders or facilitators begin a meeting with an overview of the total agenda before embarking on a discussion of any specific item. This permits adjustments to be made in the agenda which may be required due to participants having to leave early, information being unavailable at the moment, etc. Careful planning of a meeting shows respect for people's time, makes maximum creative use of resources, and produces informed and thoughtful decisions.