

A Blueprint for Better Staff Meetings

Does your staff dread meetings? It doesn't have to be this way!

Productive and positive staff meetings are shown to boost morale, lower stress and frustrations, and generate new ideas.

Whether online or in-person, you can make staff meetings beneficial to teachers and something they look forward to. Here is a four-part blueprint for planning successful, productive meetings this school year:

1

MAKE MEETINGS WELCOMING

Meetings are always going to take people away from something else they could be doing. Help separate the world of the meeting from everyday life by welcoming people to the meeting. Play fun music, offer snacks, and make it an enjoyable experience in itself-- maybe even an escape.



2

MAKE MEETINGS PURPOSEFUL

You've probably left a meeting thinking "This could've been an email." Avoid this frustration and wasted time by focusing on what needs to be accomplished at the meeting. Have a clear meeting objective and use an agenda. People need to know the purpose, and an agenda helps everyone stay on track.

Unless you have an important message that needs to be communicated in-person and to all staff at the same time, don't use meeting time to make announcements or share information that can be communicated in other ways. Spend your time solving complex problems, sharing ideas, or making decisions.

At the end of the meeting, make sure any follow-up tasks are clearly communicated and assigned. Designate one person to take notes and share this document with everyone after the meeting.

3

MAKE MEETINGS SHORTER



Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the allotted time. So, a meeting scheduled for an hour takes...an hour. Instead of assuming your meeting should be an hour long, try scheduling shorter blocks of time. Note that if you are just sharing information, attention spans peak around 10-15 minutes anyway.

Holding a "standing" meeting can help ensure you stay focused and brief--no one wants to stand for an hour. For small groups, consider a walking meeting--**walking is shown to help us generate more creative ideas** than sitting.

For more intensive problem-solving or decision-making meetings, try to cap the meeting at 45 minutes to one hour. Meetings over one hour have diminishing returns.

Along with this, honor everyone's time by making sure the meeting starts and ends on time.



4

MAKE MEETINGS POSITIVE

Recognition for achievements is more fulfilling than rewards, gifts, or free pizza.

Use the first few minutes of the meeting to celebrate successes. Share something positive you saw in a teacher's classroom, a department meeting, or a positive comment from a parent. Acknowledging the effort and achievement of individuals and groups builds morale and encourages individuals to continue to work hard.

Also consider sharing personal highlights--celebrate the new dad, the new puppy, or an upcoming vacation. See point #1--these all make the meeting more enjoyable, build community, and provide a welcome respite from the daily grind.

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