



REMOTE MEETINGS

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Business meetings

I'm sure that we have all been involved with meetings that have overrun, achieved little, where people speak over each other or where we have not been given the opportunity to give our thoughts or opinions.

With most businesses now confined to home working, applications such as Zoom and MS Teams are being utilised in an attempt to replicate 'face-to-face' meetings remotely.

Undoubtedly, these are great ways of interacting with teams, keeping spirits high and making sure business objectives are communicated, but if anything they are even harder to control and can test the patience of both the facilitators and those attending if not managed well.

This short presentation shares our tips on making the meeting as productive as possible.

Objectives

As with face-to-face meetings, there should be clear objectives for your meeting. Make sure these are communicated clearly so that everyone understands the purpose of the meeting.

Ensure the team is fully briefed on what you are trying to achieve and the desired outcomes should also have shaped the agenda and format of the meeting.

Sending this in advance will allow people to brainstorm their own ideas before the meeting commences and should help things run more smoothly.

The technology

Make sure you have given everyone a chance to check they have the technology required and suggest that they test this works in small groups before your meeting. Not only does this ensure your meeting has the best chance of working but also allows your team to 'socialise' with each other beforehand.

Ensure that the attendees know what functionality they require. Will they need cameras or will they just view your screen?

Make sure that if you want them to bring work with them, they know how to share their screens with everyone else.

Make sure you give advance warning. When technology is involved it is best to be fully prepared and practised. Surprises can lead to mistakes which makes the meeting very disjointed and can detract from the objectives.

Tight agenda

With objectives in mind, ensure that you have an agenda which gives the best possible chance of gaining the outcomes you want.

In remote meetings, the agenda is more important than ever as, without one, things can become very chaotic.

Decide, or ask the host to decide, on key talking points and a basic structure, i.e. how long roughly will be spent on each agenda point.

Distribute the agenda before the meeting but also make sure you run through it at the beginning.

Rules of engagement!

Perhaps the most important thing to ensure a productive remote meeting is to outline rules of engagement.

Decide if everyone is free to speak or whether you will invite them. If they are free to speak ensure there is a rule that lets people show when they want to speak. Speaking over each other is even worse in these meetings than normal.

Although basic, make sure that everyone is in an environment where they are not going to be interrupted and the background noise is low. In these sunny days there could be a temptation to sit outside, but wind or even bird noise could distract others. It is worth considering muting microphones when they are not in use.

Help everyone to stay on the same page by establishing some basic guidelines that ensure everyone knows what to expect in advance and what to do/not to do in the meeting itself.

Closing / Follow up

As with any meeting, ask if anyone has any questions or other points they wish to discuss.

Run through the salient points and what actions should be taken and then follow this up with an email afterwards.

Further support?

Please feel free to reach out to us. We are always happy to answer any question, please contact our MD Chris Goulding on:

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