

Seven Business Meeting Etiquette Tips

Meetings are frequently named as the biggest time wasters. They don't need to be. Meetings are more important than ever as a way to set project directions and get everyone on the same page. Consistent meeting behavior helps make your time in the meeting worthwhile.

1. Dinner jacket or dinner on your jacket ~

First decide on how formal your meeting will be. Give advance warning to attendees about special requirements (like dress code, notebooks, materials, supplies) to ensure people understand what's expected and can prepare accordingly.

2. What time is it?

BE ON TIME! Busy people don't want to wait and will bail out if others don't show up on time. If meetings routinely don't start when scheduled, people will stop taking meeting notices seriously and nobody will attend. Start and end meetings as scheduled.

3. Get to the point already...

First announce the purpose and the desired outcome of the meeting. Now stick to the point and stay on task. People tend to steer off course from time to time through various discussions, as the leader you need to keep everyone focused on the prize. When you have reached your desired outcome, move on to the next item on the agenda. When completed, end the meeting.

4. The 37 minute meeting agenda ~

Prepare a meeting agenda in advance and circulate this to your attendees - remember that meetings can come in all different durations, so get people's attention by having weird duration meetings. Meetings that start and finish on time (or even early!), and achieve all objectives outlined in the agenda will be appreciated by all, and will increase your chance of a better meeting next time.

5. Empty barrels make the most noise.

Good facilitation skills are important when you have people fond of their own voice. Use meeting ground-rules to help avoid speaking for the sake of speaking.

6. Meeting Checklist -

Ask yourself, these questions when planning a meeting: 1. What is your main objective? 2. What are your criteria for establishing whether or not the meeting is a success? 3. What is the relationship between you and others at the meetings? 4. What type of participation are you seeking from them? 5. Is any specific preparation needed prior to the meeting?

7. AOB

Let's be blunt - Any Other Business can also mean Any Old Bull unless you keep tight hold of the halter. Ask for AOB points at the start of the meeting and only give them airtime if there is time. Check if any points have already been covered, then get the group to prioritize each AOB point and put a time limit on them.