

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS Q&A/EXPECTATIONS

These were developed as part of a Meeting Tune Up Program.

Q – *What happens when a key decision maker(s) does not attend the meeting?*

A – Meeting leader needs to determine if the meeting can be effective without them. If not, the meeting should be cancelled and rescheduled. The impact of the cancellation on the group should be addressed directly with the absent key decision maker.

Expectation: If an attendee can't attend a meeting they should reject the meeting in Outlook. The meeting organizer needs to review the attendee responses prior to the meeting and determine in advance if the meeting will have the proper representation. If not, the meeting should be cancelled in advance.

Q – *When a staff member or manager arrives late to a meeting - how should the situation be addressed?*

A – The meeting should proceed without interruption. If the person who arrived late requests an update on what has occurred, remind them of our effective meeting training. Inform them you can address their questions at the end of the meeting or in a separate conversation.

Expectation: All meeting attendees arrive on time or communicate in advance they will be late. When an unexpected conflict occurs, it is acceptable to ask another attendee to inform the meeting leader you will be late. If you are a key decision maker, call the meeting owner as soon as possible. The meeting may need to be cancelled/rescheduled.

Q – *Should a meeting start late if a staff member or manager is not in attendance?*

A – No, the meeting should begin on time.

Expectation: All meeting attendees arrive on time or 1- 5 minutes early.

Q – *How should answering cell phones in meetings be addressed?*

A – If a call must be taken (urgent), the person receiving the call should walk out of the meeting to handle the call.

Expectation: Phones and pagers should be set to vibrate for meetings. If a person answers a phone in a meeting and proceeds to have a conversation in the meeting, get their attention and point to the door.

Q – What action should be taken if a meeting member consistently comes to meetings unprepared or does not complete action items?

A – Explain to the individual the importance of their contributions to the success of the meeting in addition to the negative impact on the rest of the group. It is suggested that the conversation be one on one. If this does not work let the person know you will have to address the situation with their manager and request another person be assigned to the meeting.

Expectation – All participants are expected to come to meetings prepared and ready to discuss/contribute to the topic. All accepted action items are completed on time or the meeting leader is advised in advance that the action will not be completed as scheduled. Meeting leader and individual can agree on a new acceptable date. If no acceptable date can be agreed too, the situation should be escalated. Action items are only valid if the person assigned the item acknowledges the action item and they agree on a due date.

Q- If a person feels they should not be attending a meeting, how should they address the situation?

A – If you do not believe you are contributing to a meeting, address it with the meeting leader. Suggest that you either stop attending the meeting or come only when your expertise is required. Address this offline or at the beginning/end of the meeting.

Expectation – No employee should be in a meeting in which they are not contributing or obtaining required status. Only those employees required for the success of the meeting should be required attendees, all others should be optional. It is acceptable to ask employees to attend only the portion of a meeting that impacts them or requires their expertise. This should be communicated in advance and the agenda used for an estimated arrival time.

Q- When a meeting gets “off subject”, how should it be addressed during the meeting?

A – Every member has the authority to politely interrupt and suggest that the discussion be moved to the “parking lot” or taken off-line. Remind the group about time constraints and the meeting objective.

Expectation – Every employee in attendance is responsible for successful meetings. If the meeting gets “off-subject” it is anyone and everyone’s responsibility to correct the situation.
