



Meeting Management

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Enhance your ability to communicate with others in meetings and through presentations.

Meeting Management

Preparing for Meetings

Careful preparation can make the difference between feeling confident and in control, and coming out of a meeting feeling really unhappy about the way it's gone.

You should get an agenda before each meeting and a set of minutes afterwards. The agenda needs to be detailed enough for you to know whether anything important or contentious is coming up. You also need to receive it in plenty of time to be able to consult colleagues or seek additional information if you need to. If there is anything you want to put on the agenda, don't be afraid to. (It is a good idea to find out early on how you should go about doing this as practice will vary between organizations.)

Reading the Reports

In some organizations, you will receive reports which form the basis for discussion on various issues. Sometimes these are quite concise and sometimes they can be quite bulky. The time that you want to spend reading things like this will be limited, so it's important that you approach the task systematically and develop your ability to digest the material.

- When the reports arrive, scan them quickly to establish the scope and content.
- Write down any initial questions you may have and look for answers in the subsequent stages.
- Read conclusions, summaries, and recommendations first.
- Highlight sections you will want to refer to.

You can develop the ability to read faster by:

- Concentrating
- Never going back on a sentence
- Using a ruler to keep you on a line
- Not reading each word mentally
- Being on the lookout for important areas
- Always marking useful sections (highlighter, post-it notes, markers)
- You can use a code to remind you (For example: 1 = interesting, 2 = important, 3 = vitally important)

Once you have read the reports, put them to one side and try to write out the key issues and ideas in your own words. Then try these tips:

- Reread the document and check your understanding.
- Establish your own objectives, which should be your measurable targets for the meeting.
- Write them down.

- Identify what you want to do on each item. (Remember, what you say on one issue may have an effect on other issues, so pick your issue carefully.)
- Prioritize.
- If you are going to speak on an item make a note of the things you want to cover.
- Check your understanding with others.

Questions to ask yourself when preparing for a meeting include:

- What information do you need to take with you?
- What do you want to get out of the meeting?
- Is there something in particular you want to get done?
- What contribution do you want to make?
- Are you just trying to get information?
- Do you want to follow up something that was raised at an earlier meeting and check progress on it?
- Do you just want to draw attention to something?
- Do you want to make sure people are aware of a problem so that it doesn't happen again?

During the Meeting

Keep your contributions short.

Your point is more likely to be understood and to have an impact if you keep it reasonably short.

Don't take so many notes that you lose track of what is going on.

Most meetings are minuted so just write down the things that affect you (such as things that you are responsible for doing before the next meeting) or things that will jog your memory when it comes to reporting back to your employees or supervisor.

Avoid interrupting others to make your contribution. Do not let others interrupt you.

In some meetings it is difficult to get your contribution in. If you do have to interrupt, do so firmly and politely. Once speaking, do not be tempted to make several points for fear of not getting in again.

Think about your non-verbal behavior.

Both the volume and tone of your voice are important here. If you are too quiet you will lose impact and be open to interruptions. Eye contact is also important. Remember to sit somewhere that makes it easy to catch the eye of the chair so that you can get your contribution in. While you are speaking, distribute your eye contact throughout the meeting, but direct it at those for whom your contribution is most relevant. This enables you to judge how your contribution is being received.

Time your contributions.

Raise points at the relevant time for the maximum impact. Do not wait until the last minute before airing an opposing view. If others are on the verge of making a decision, they will be irritated if you suddenly come up with opposition.

A leader and members who have been trained in the skills needed to work together effectively. What skills do you need?

A means for recording ideas and keeping track of what goes on. How will you do that?

A meeting location free of interruption from other activities. Where can you hold your meetings?

Presentation Tips

9 Secrets to Command Attention

- 1) Dress in a professional manner
- 2) Walk to the podium with confidence
- 3) Stand erect behind the podium
- 4) Look at the audience and pause before you start to speak
- 5) Project your voice to speak with authority
- 6) Convey dynamism
- 7) Begin with a powerful introduction
- 8) Establish your credibility early
- 9) Leave the podium with a confident, purposeful gait

10 Secrets to Control Fear

- 1) You can never prepare too much
- 2) Be totally familiar with your introduction
- 3) Practice out loud and practice often
- 4) Practice mentally
- 5) Record your speech
- 6) Concentrate on your message, not on yourself
- 7) Know that to feel nervous is to be human
- 8) Breathe deeply
- 9) Channel your adrenaline into positive energy
- 10) Know that you appear more confident than you feel

10 Secrets to Build Credibility

- 1) Dress to convey authority and professionalism
- 2) Project your voice
- 3) Share your credentials
- 4) Use quotations or testimonies
- 5) Offer statistics
- 6) Use examples and case studies
- 7) Compare or contrast ideas
- 8) Use visuals
- 9) Restate ideas in a variety of ways
- 10) Deliver the message dynamically

10 Secrets to Prepare Like a Pro

- 1) Check out the speaking environment prior to your presentation
- 2) Change the environment to fit your style if necessary
- 3) Use the three-minute prep for unexpected speeches

- 4) Use sheets of paper for notes, not note cards
- 5) Use nouns as notes to jog your memory
- 6) Time your speech and edit, edit, edit
- 7) Select a title that's a hit
- 8) Prepare your introducer with an exciting introduction
- 9) Anticipate questions from the audience
- 10) Have questions ready

8 Secrets to Close with Power

- 1) Summarize your main points
- 2) Refer to the occasion
- 3) End with a powerful quotation
- 4) Make a startling statement
- 5) Leave listeners with a vivid illustration
- 6) Issue a challenge or an appeal
- 7) Keep a second closing in reserve
- 8) Leave the podium with a confident, purposeful gait

10 Secrets to Sharpen Your Delivery

- 1) Speak clearly
- 2) Vary your pace
- 3) Use silent pauses often
- 4) Limit the use of vocalized pauses
- 5) Vary your inflection
- 6) Look at everyone frequently
- 7) Use movement to maintain attention
- 8) Use natural gestures to generate interest
- 9) Hide your errors
- 10) Leave playthings at your seat

Pumping up a Presentation

Public speaking is an opportunity that leaders must learn to grasp at every opportunity. It gives you a chance to establish yourself with the community and tell people about your company. Whether you are making a sale, pitching your idea to the boss, or managing a crisis, effective speaking skills are critical to building credibility and driving your message home. People want to do business with people they like and trust.

Even the most secure speakers shouldn't wing it. No matter how well you know your product or service, it pays to plan. Think about what's most relevant to your audience and put their interests first.

Luckily, no presentation has to be perfect. The numbers of people who aren't good speakers far outweigh those who are good, so there's lots of room for those who are just OK at public speaking.

However, if you want to move your presentation from dull to dynamic, you can pump up your presentation in seven easy steps:

- 1) **Talk to yourself.** Practice in front of a mirror, trying to look relaxed and friendly. Stand with your arms in front of your body, with your elbows at 90 degrees and your palms at 45 degrees, leaning forward. That says, “I’m here, I’m engaged, and I don’t have a weapon.”
- 2) **Have a point.** Decide on your core message ahead of time. Bring the listener quickly to the point of action by crafting your theme into your introductory passages.
- 3) **Look them in the eye.** Making frequent eye contact for a few seconds with listeners in the audience will create an aura of confidence and familiarity, which will help you get your message through.
- 4) **Know the room.** Boost your comfort level by checking out your speaking venue in advance. Practice with the microphone and any visual aids that you plan to use.
- 5) **Crack a smile.** Smiling tells the audience you’re enthusiastic and confident—just the kind of person they want to hear. Smiling can also relax you, reduce your heart rate, and help you breathe easier.
- 6) **Pump up the volume.** People need more energy than they think to make a strong presentation. Use a louder voice than you think you need.
- 7) **Don’t be a comic.** When you tell a joke, you might offend somebody. Tell a funny story about yourself instead.

Personal Development

Look back at your pre-assignment. What areas did you feel that you needed improvement on? Use this template to outline a plan for action.

Area of Improvement	What I Am Going To Do	How I Am Going To Do It	When I Am Going To Do It By

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Further Reading:

- ✓ *Management for Meetings and Events,(2008), By Julia RutherfordSilvers*
- ✓ *Management,(2012), By Warren R. Plunkett, Gemmy Allen, RaymondAttner*