Introduction	Meetings are an inevitable part of daily working life. They should be productive, collaborative forums that help drive a business or project forward.
Why it is important	Understanding how to manage a meeting is important because it plays a vital role in improved communication, engagement, collaboration and information sharing.
Use to assist with	- Preparing for a meeting (meeting agenda) - Running a meeting - Meeting follow up (meeting minutes)

1.   Know why you are having the meeting

- Is the meeting to generate new ideas, to gather information or to make decisions, or a combination of these? Making the purpose of the meeting clear will help it to run smoothly.

2.   Plan and structure the meeting

- All meetings need some structure.
- Set an agenda (or at least a list of things that need to be covered).
- There is no ideal length for a meeting. As a rule, pick a sensible timeframe and try to stick to it. Make sure the content covered in the timeframe is meaningful.

3.   Be prepared

- Have your agenda and try to stick to it.
- Assign roles within the meeting;
  - who is chairing the meeting?
  - who is taking the minutes/recording actions?
  - do you have presenters, if so, do they have the information needed?
  - has technology been considered for those needing to connect online?
- If you are bringing an idea or topic to the meeting, make sure you have enough information to be able to answer some follow-up questions and have research or examples to back up your idea.

4.   Arrive early and start the meeting on time

- The published meeting time is the time when the talking starts, not when you expect people to turn up.
- Late arrivals can use up to 10 minutes of the meeting and often make it longer. Start at the scheduled time.
- Are you finding a lot of people arrive late? Get creative with your meeting times – make the meeting at 5:50pm instead of 6pm. This helps people take notice and remember the time; they will also have to actually think about how to make it to the meeting on time.

5.   Keep meetings on track

- Don't lose sight of what the meeting is there to achieve – the agenda and objective is there for a reason.
- Keep the meeting strictly business – don't try and resolve personal conflicts in the middle of the meeting.
- While there is a difference between being on track and off topic – leave some room for creativity in your brainstorming and meetings. People have great ideas and can add value – some creativity is great at helping you move a discussion forward.

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6. Have a strategy and safe place for input

- Don't confuse "keeping on track" with discouraging contributions – just have a creative way to manage ideas and contributions that don't necessarily fit in with what you're talking about because these ideas can be helpful in future.
- Have a creative way to capture people's input so you can come back to it or carry it over to the next agenda.
- Make sure if you are saving an idea or discussion topic for later that the person whose idea it was understands why and make sure that you come back to it. Everyone deserves to feel valued for their time, ideas, experience and input.

7. Clarify your decision-making process

- You don't want to spend valuable meeting time debating when the group can consider a decision to be final.
- Before the meeting starts, decide how decisions are going to be made:
  - Majority Rules: everyone can voice their opinion, but a decision is final if at least 50 per cent of people are on board; or
  - Consensus: decisions are only final when everyone is on board.
- There is no right or wrong way to make decisions – find what works for your meeting and stick to it.

8. Make sure everyone participates and is heard

- Draw other people's thoughts out; ask for their opinions when they haven't spoken for a while.
- Ideally you want an atmosphere that is collaborative and promotes discussion.
- People should be able to disagree with each other and listen to different opinions in a way that is constructive.
- Have a strategy to make sure everyone is heard – maybe it's around the table discussion or calling on individuals for their opinion when they are quiet.

9. Close the meeting with action items and communicate them clearly

- Members should leave the meeting knowing two things: what was accomplished at the meeting and what their individual actions are (if any).
- Make sure action items are specific and time limited.
- After the meeting consider sending an email with everyone's action items and due dates and mark them clearly in the minutes.

10. Follow up

- If you have taken minutes, make sure the minutes are distributed in a timely manner. If no minutes were taken, consider sending an email with everyone's action items and due dates.
- Make sure everyone in the group knows when the next meeting is scheduled.
- If anything was taken on notice during the meeting – make sure this information is distributed back to the group in a timely manner.
- Use all items not addressed and carried over to the next meeting to start your next meeting agenda.

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