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Meeting agenda is generally known as ‘orders of the day’, which the participants hope to discuss during the meeting. A meeting agenda is communicated prior to the meeting so that the participants can prepare for the discussion. A standard meeting agenda should include the purpose of meeting, participants’ progress on previous action-items and review of the commitments done by the participants.Importance of defining the Meeting AgendaMeeting agenda is very useful and important when it comes to business meetings. If clear agenda is not defined before conducting a meeting, a lot of time would be wasted to understand what is the supposed need and the outcome of the meeting. The participants would not understand what they have to do. Also while setting up the meeting agenda, the participant list can be refined.If a particular participant is not needed in agenda item, then he/she should not be invited. 8 Steps to write a Meeting AgendaThere are multiple ways in which an individual can write a meeting agenda. The following steps highlight how a good meeting agenda can be defined:1. Define ObjectivesPrecisely define why the meeting is required along with objectives and purpose. All the key points should be mentioned as a list of the topics which need to be discussed during the meeting. Remember to put only the key and important points only so that everyone clearly understand the objectives.2. Define Outcomes and DeliverablesClearly call out the outcomes expected from the meeting e.g. a list, strategy or a document. The deliverables should be clearly mentioned so that the attendees can have some view on what can be done.3. List Attendees/ParticipantsMake a list of all participants required in the meeting. You can also mention some participants as optional. If possible, call out names of the required attendees against the individual agenda points.4. Call out Location and TimeClearly mention the location (meeting room or virtual), the time and the duration of the meeting. Also make sure to check the availability of key participants and call the meeting at the time they are available. Duration is very important. 5. Mention Time zoneMake sure to mention the time zone correctly in case the participants are from different geographies. 6. Attach reference documentsAttach documents or references if you expect participants to know or study something before joining the meeting. These can either be email attachments or if in office, some reference material can be distributed to the key attendees.7. Define Time limits, if anyPut a time limit on agenda line items if there are more than 2 or 3 so that lot of time does not go in the first few points.By mentioning these time limits in the meeting agenda, one can structure the meeting well. The more structured is the meeting, more efficient it is for reaching an outcome.8. Define it as one off meeting or seriesClearly mention in the agenda if the meeting is part of a series or is it a one meeting in which a decision might be required. If there is a follow up, mention it in the agenda if possible. 9. Review from Previous MeetingIf this meeting is a follow-up from a previous meeting, then also mention the previous action items and activities in the meeting agenda for the upcoming meeting.The first point in the agenda then should be Review.Meeting Agenda TemplateAfter going through the steps above, the following template or sample can be referred for creating a simple meeting agenda:1. Title of the Meeting: Provide a simple & clear meeting title2. ObjectiveClear goal and objective of the meeting3. Participantsa. Required Participantsb. Optional Participants4. Key Agenda Points in a numbered lista. List of all Agenda Itemsb. Action Itemsc. Review Items5. Location & Time (Optional- as it would be part of invite)Meeting Agenda Example FormatExample 1 : With time and eventsTitle: Leadership Project MeetingObjective: Team Introduction and Project AllocationParticipants: Leaders, New JoinersAgenda Points0:00-0:10 Host welcome and introduction: Host of the meeting introduces himself and welcomes participants 0:10-0:25 Attendee introductions: Ask every participant to introduce themselves and share their reason for wanting to serve 0:25-0:45 choose a project: Introduce some project ideas and keep the meeting open for discussion 0:45-0:55 Set goals and identify leadership: Ask each participant to consider personal goals and make a realistic but determined service commitment 0:55-1:00 Conclusions1:00-1:15 Leadership team meeting: Meet with the leaders to set weekly conference and work on action-itemsExample 2: Normal ListTitle: Formulate New Launch StrategyObjective: Creating a strategy and solution to the new business scenariosParticipants: Smith, John, AdamKey Agenda Points1. Challenges due to a particular issue - John2. Discuss Market trends - Adam3. Views from all participants - Smith4. Discuss solution - John, Adam5. Finalize approach - John Hence, this concludes the definition of Meeting Agenda along with its overview.This article has been researched & authored by the Business Concepts Team which comprises of MBA students, management professionals, and industry experts. It has been reviewed & published by the MBA Skool Team. The content on MBA Skool has been created for educational & academic purpose only.Browse the definition and meaning of more similar terms. The Management Dictionary covers over 1800 business concepts from 5 categories.Continue Reading: « Manpower Planning Minimal Compliance »Share this Page on: When we organize or attend meetings, we expect them to be well thought out, efficient, and bring value to everyone involved. We want meetings to be worth our valuable time. Preparing a meeting agenda ahead of time and sharing it with other participants can help to achieve maximum potential. In fact, a clear agenda is a cornerstone of any successful meeting, and not having one is like going to an exam without studying for it. What is a meeting agenda? A meeting agenda is a document that lists topics, like talking points and action items, that need to be discussed during an upcoming meeting. It should be shared beforehand with all the participants and include an overall framework of the meeting, the people responsible for certain actions, and an estimated timeframe for each discussion point. Let’s look into 5 key reasons why having a meeting agenda is so important. 1. Meeting Agenda Sets the Intention The main purpose of having a meeting agenda is to define the goal of a meeting. An agenda for a meeting is like a table of contents in a book. It helps to orientate participants by giving structure and showing what to expect. Consequently, when everyone has clarity on the reasons behind their meeting, it will be more productive. 2. Meeting Agenda Encourages Contribution Preparing and sharing a meeting agenda beforehand is an incredibly effective way to encourage attendees to contribute to the discussion. When your colleagues are informed about the talking points in advance, they can come prepared and ready to share their ideas, concerns, or questions. As a result, your meeting will be more constructive and proactive. 3. Meeting Agenda Creates a Roadmap It is easy to get distracted and go off-topic when you do not have a guiding document to lead the conversation. A well-structured meeting agenda will keep you on track and ensure that every important matter is discussed. It will prevent having to schedule any additional meetings because you forgot to ask your colleagues about the upcoming project or if too much time was spent talking about non-work-related things such as what everybody was doing at the weekend. 4. Meeting Agenda Provides Documentation Each day brings multiple things you have to remember to take care of. Some of your goals for the day ahead can become mixed up or forgotten if you do not have some form of notes to keep track of these matters (Learn more about getting things done here.) The last thing you want to do is add to your busy work schedule by having to repeat talking points or have to ask your colleagues about decisions that were made during an important meeting. This is where having a meeting agenda really starts to make sense. You can use it as a reference point and a reminder of the subjects that were discussed, the next steps to be taken, and delegate the best people to take responsibility for them. 5. Meeting Agenda Defines Responsibilities A meeting agenda that you can share with all the attendees can provide an outline of the responsibilities that each person has before the meeting. This way, everyone has the same information on who is accountable for what and when the tasks need to be completed. Having an agenda prevents any confusion or misunderstandings that might arise if such information is not recorded. In Summary A well-structured meeting agenda shared prior to the meeting not only saves time but more importantly, sets the framework for the flow of conversation. It also increases the chances of participants being proactive and keeps them accountable. At MeetingKing we can help you prepare your meeting agenda easily and efficiently. Furthermore, if you are not sure what an agenda should include, have a look at different types of meeting agenda templates that we created to make your meetings go smoothly. ___ The image above by Freepik About Post Author Your agenda tells your team what to expect during a meeting and how they can prepare for it. Ideally, you’ll use your agenda to connect your team with the meeting’s purpose, assign tasks or items to team members, and designate a realistic amount of time to each agenda item. A great meeting agenda maximizes the meeting’s effectiveness and keeps your team on track.There’s a good chance you’ve experienced that painful feeling that arises when you’re unsure why you’re in a meeting and don’t know what to expect. Meetings without agendas tend to cause that feeling—that’s why we believe meeting agendas should be an integral part of your meeting culture.An effective agenda communicates the purpose of your meeting, gives your team the chance to prepare their agenda items, and keeps everyone on track. Whether you’re preparing for your next board meeting, staff meeting, or business meeting, we’ll help you write an agenda that will maximize your meeting’s potential.Free customizable meeting agendaWhat is a meeting agenda?A meeting agenda serves as a structured roadmap for your meeting, detailing the topics and activities planned. Its primary role is to provide meeting participants with a clear framework, outlining the sequence of events, the leader for each agenda item, and the time allocated for each task. By having this agenda as a guide both before and throughout the meeting, it helps to facilitate an efficient and productive flow of discussion.How to write a meeting agendaCrafting a meeting agenda is a key step in ensuring a focused and productive meeting. Here's how to do it effectively.1. Clarify meeting objectivesThe first step in writing a meeting agenda is to clearly define any goals. In clarifying the goal, be as specific as possible. This specificity helps guide the discussion and ensure that the meeting remains focused. It also helps stakeholders prepare for the meeting. For example, if the goal is to finalize the budget for the next quarter or discuss new business, participants would come prepared with relevant data and insights.A well-defined goal also helps set the meeting's tone and align everyone's expectations. This clarity leads to a more structured discussion and a more productive meeting overall.2. Invite participant inputInviting input from participants before finalizing the agenda is a critical step in creating a comprehensive and inclusive meeting plan. This involves reaching out to potential attendees and asking if there's anything specific they would like to discuss or add to the meeting agenda.For example, if you're planning a meeting for a project team, you could send an email asking each member to suggest topics they feel are important to address. This could reveal issues or ideas you hadn't considered, ensuring a more well-rounded agenda.Incorporating participant input not only makes the agenda more comprehensive but also increases engagement. When team members see their suggestions included, they feel valued and are more likely to participate actively in the meeting. It also ensures that the meeting addresses the concerns of all attendees.Gathering input can be done through various channels, like email, shared docs, or team collaboration tools. The key is to make it easy for meeting participants to contribute and to ensure their suggestions are considered and, where appropriate, included in the final agenda.Read: 6-step guide to requirements gathering for project success3. Outline key questions for discussionMaking a list of important things to talk about is important for keeping the meeting on track and focused. Start by identifying the main meeting topics that need to be addressed and framing them as questions.For instance, if the meeting is to discuss the progress of an ongoing project, key questions might include: What are the current roadblocks in the project?How are we tracking against the project timelineWhat resources are needed to maintain the pace of work?These questions serve as talking points and a guide for the discussion, ensuring that all relevant topics are covered. They also help in structuring the conversation, making it easier for participants to prepare and engage effectively.4. Define each task’s purposeEach task or topic on the agenda should have a clearly defined purpose. This transparency helps participants understand the importance of each discussion point and how it relates to the overall goal of the meeting.For example, if one of the agenda items is to review recent client feedback and performance metrics, the purpose might be to identify areas for improvement in customer service. By stating this purpose, participants can focus their thoughts on this specific objective, leading to a more targeted and fruitful discussion.Defining the purpose of each task also helps prevent the meeting from going off track. When participants understand why a topic is being discussed, they are less likely to veer off-topic, making the meeting more efficient.Read: How to prioritize tasks in 4 steps (and get work done)5. Allocate time for agenda itemsEffective meeting management requires allotting time for each item on the agenda. This includes determining the amount of time needed for each meeting topic or task and scheduling the meeting appropriately.For instance, if you have five items on your agenda, you might allocate 10 minutes for a brief update, 20 minutes for brainstorming, and 15 minutes for discussing action items. This time allocation should be based on the complexity and importance of each topic.Effective time management requires being realistic with your time estimates and factoring in extra time for unforeseen conversations or inquiries. This approach helps in keeping the meeting within the scheduled time frame, respecting everyone's time, and maintaining focus.6. Assign topic facilitatorsAssigning facilitators for each topic on the agenda can greatly enhance the effectiveness of the meeting. A facilitator’s role is to guide the discussion, make certain that the conversation stays on track, and that all voices are heard.For example, if one of the agenda items is to discuss sales strategies, you might assign this topic to a senior salesperson. Their expertise and familiarity with the subject can help steer the conversation productively.Facilitators should be chosen based on their knowledge of the topic and their ability to manage group discussions. They should also be briefed on their role and the expectations for the discussion.7. Write the meeting agendaFinally, compile all the elements into a structured and comprehensive agenda. The agenda should include the meeting’s goal, a list of topics to be discussed with their purposes, time allocations, and assigned facilitators. This structure provides a clear roadmap for the meeting, ensuring that all important points are covered.Share the agenda with all participants well in advance of the meeting. This allows them to prepare and ensures that everyone is on the same page. A well-written agenda is a key tool in running an effective and productive meeting.Free customizable meeting agendaTips to create an effective meeting agendaLet’s start with some of our favorite tips on creating great meeting agendas so you can make the most of yours:Create and share your meeting agenda as early as possible. At the very latest, you should share your meeting agenda an hour before the meeting time. This allows everyone to prepare for what’s going to happen. Your team can also relay questions or additional agenda items to you for a potential adjustment before the meeting. Besides, when your team members have a chance to properly prepare themselves, they’ll have a much easier time focusing during the meeting.Link to any relevant pre-reading materials in advance. This can be the presentation deck, additional context, or a previous decision. Everyone arriving at the meeting will be on the same page and ready to move the discussion forward rather than asking a ton of questions that take up relevant time.Assign facilitators for each agenda item. Remember that feeling of being called on in school when you didn’t know the answer? It’s a pretty terrible feeling that we’re sure you don’t want to evoke in your teammates. By assigning a facilitator for each agenda item before the meeting, you allow them to prepare for a quick rundown of the topic, questions, and feedback. Define and prioritize your agenda items. Differentiate between the three categories of agenda items: informational, discussion topics, and action items. Clarifying the purpose of each agenda item helps your team member understand what’s most important and what to focus on. You’ll also want to prioritize which items are most important and absolutely have to be discussed during the meeting and which ones can be addressed asynchronously, should the clock run out.Use your meeting agenda during the meeting to track notes and action items. That way, all of the meeting information is in one place. If anyone has questions about decisions or action items from the meeting, they have an easy place to find it. Bonus: Do this in Asana so you can assign out action items and next steps to ensure nothing falls through the cracks. Asana also integrates with Zoom and pulls in your Zoom recording or meeting transcript directly into the meeting agenda task.Create flow by categorizing your agenda items. To maximize productivity, you’ll want to create a meeting agenda that flows well. Batch similar items together and ensure they can build off of one another. For example, list any informational items before the discussion items so your team has all of the information going into the discussion. Allocate enough time for each item on your agenda. Nobody will complain about a meeting that runs short—keeping everyone longer than anticipated isn’t as much fun. Plan sufficient time for each agenda item by calculating an estimated time and adding a couple of minutes as a buffer. This will help with keeping your team on track and moving on from a topic when the time runs out.By sticking to these best practices, you can ensure that your meeting agenda is a reliable tool and does the job—before, during, and after your meeting.Read: 9 ways to improve your team’s efficiency at workWhy are meeting agendas important?Whether you work from home and take virtual calls or sit in the office and meet in person, meetings can be incredibly draining. Beginning with some small talk may be nice to get to know each other better or catch up on what everyone did this past weekend but it certainly isn’t goal-oriented or productive. A meeting agenda can help your team maximize the potential of each meeting you hold. Our research shows that unnecessary meetings accounted for 157 hours of “work” in 2020, compared to 103 in 2019. Considering a 40-hour work week, that’s almost four weeks of wasted time. This is where your meeting agenda comes in. If you’re doing it right, writing your meeting agenda is the first and best indicator of whether or not your meeting is actually necessary. If you find that everything on your meeting agenda can be discussed asynchronously, you can cancel the meeting and share your message in a time-saving email.That isn’t to say all meetings should be replaced by emails. If you’re sure that the meeting is justified and necessary in order to drive your team’s progress, have that meeting. However, always make sure that you create an agenda before getting together so your team members know what you’ll be discussing and why the meeting matters. Free customizable meeting agendaHere are a few more great reasons to have meeting agendas:Your agenda allows everyone to prepare for the meeting. Ideally, every item on your agenda will have a dedicated topic facilitator. When everyone going into the meeting knows what their responsibilities are in advance, they have time to prepare and will be more efficient during the meeting.It shows you’re considerate of your team’s time. When your team receives a well-thought-out meeting agenda, they’ll immediately see that the meeting is actually necessary. Besides, it’s also a roadmap that will keep you on track during the meeting and ensure no time is wasted.An agenda sets clear expectations of what will and won’t be discussed. Think of a meeting agenda as a way of setting boundaries and ensuring that only topics on the agenda will be talked about. If anything comes up during the meeting that needs to be discussed, write it down in your minutes and return to it later. Either at the end of your meeting—if you got through it faster than expected—asynchronously, or in the next meeting.It keeps your team on track. Your meeting agenda will prevent your team from drifting off—whether that’s discussing non-agenda topics (like the barbecue at Kat’s place last night) or taking too much time for an item that had specific time allocated. Your agenda will provide purpose, structure, and opportunities to collaborate. With a clear plan for everyone to follow, your team will go into the meeting knowing the purpose and goal of the meeting. Your meeting agenda also allows your team to direct their attention toward opportunities to collaborate, whether that’s during a brainstorming session, a town hall, or your daily standup.Track next steps and action items so nothing falls through the cracks. Keep your agenda open during the meeting to capture any next steps or action items. By adding them directly into the agenda, these items won’t be forgotten when the meeting ends.Meetings are great opportunities for your team to bond but the time spent on small talk can be worked into the first few minutes of the agenda rather than surfacing every now and then during the meeting, disrupting the flow and productivity or your team’s discussion.Meeting agenda examplesWe’ve discussed what makes a good meeting agenda and what you should avoid doing but, as always, it’s easiest to learn from a real life example. Let’s take a look at a project kickoff meeting agenda created in Asana:Free customizable meeting agendaAs you can see, each item has a timebox and a teammate assigned to ensure everyone knows when it’s their turn and how long they have to lead their discussion or give their presentation. The agenda also has relevant files attached and is shared with all team members for visibility and better collaboration.Meetings are a staple in the professional world, each with its own unique focus and dynamics. Understanding how to tailor your meeting agenda to the type of meeting you're conducting is key to ensuring effective communication and teamwork. Here are some common types of meetings and examples of how to structure their agendas.Team meeting agendaTeam meetings serve as a platform for team building, decision making, and brainstorming. They can vary in frequency and duration but are essential for ensuring alignment and forward momentum. Effective team meeting agendas should include recurring items for regular meetings and space for new, ad-hoc topics. It’s also vital to track next steps and responsibilities assigned during the meeting. An example of a 45-minute team meeting agenda might cover metrics, a round-table plan, identification of blockers, and recognition of team members' contributions.Daily Scrum meeting agendaDaily scrum meetings, or stand-ups, are brief, focused gatherings aimed at keeping the team aligned during a sprint. These meetings typically cover blockers, a recap of the previous day’s work, goals for the current day, and progress towards sprint goals. The agility of these meetings helps in maintaining momentum and addressing issues promptly.Project kickoff meeting agendaProject kickoff meetings bring together cross-functional teams to start a new project. These meetings set the tone for the project and align everyone on objectives and expectations. The agenda should cover the project brief, roles and responsibilities, meeting cadence, actionable next steps, and a Q&A session to clarify doubts and ensure everyone is on the same page.Retrospective meeting agendaA retrospective meeting is a type of recurring meeting focused on reflecting on a past period of work, usually at the end of a project cycle or sprint. Its main purpose is to share information among team members about what worked well and what didn't. During the meeting, the entire team discusses various meeting topics, including successes, challenges, and blockers that impacted their work. This process helps in identifying areas for improvement and developing strategies to address any issues. Retrospective meetings are vital for continuous team development and ensuring better outcomes in future work cycles.One-on-one meeting agendaOne-on-one meetings, whether they are between a manager and a direct report, peer-to-peer, or skip-level, are crucial for discussing work projects, roadblocks, and career development. They are foundational for building trust. A good agenda for these meetings should balance topics like motivation, communication, growth, and work-related discussions. Avoid status updates; those are better suited for stand-up meetings. Sample questions for a weekly one-on-one might include assessing highlights and lowlights of the week, discussing any blockers, and inquiring about work-life balance.Remote one-on-one meeting agendaRemote one-on-one meetings require a slightly different approach, with a focus on rapport-building and clear communication. Since physical presence is lacking, these meetings benefit from a shared online agenda accessible to all participants. Key points could include checking in on general well-being, discussing current work assignments, and addressing any immediate concerns or assistance needed.Read: Why one-on-one meetings are crucial to your team’s successSkip-level meeting agendaSkip-level meetings, involving senior managers and employees not in their direct report chain, offer a chance to connect across organizational levels. These meetings are ideal for discussing broader career development and providing feedback to senior leadership. Agenda items might cover clarity on company strategies and goals, personal professional objectives, and suggestions for organizational improvements.Leadership team meeting agendaLeadership team meetings are vital for strategic decision-making and issue resolution at the highest levels of an organization. An effective agenda for such meetings might include personal updates, reviewing key metrics, sharing wins and insights, discussing important messages, addressing pressing issues, and allocating time for an open discussion or "hot seat" session where specific topics are addressed in-depth.Each type of meeting, be it an all-hands gathering, one-on-one discussion, performance review, or team brainstorming session, requires a thoughtfully crafted agenda to avoid unproductive meetings and keep discussions on track. By using these meeting agenda examples, you can ensure that each meeting, regardless of its format, contributes meaningfully to the organization's goals and enhances teamwork and collaboration.Read: 5 tips for leading great meetingsRunning an effective meetingIt’s one thing to have an amazingly organized and detailed agenda that your team can reference before the meeting—using it as a tool during the meeting is a whole other ballpark. These tips will help you make your meeting agenda as useful during the meeting as it is as a preparation toolStick to your agenda. The best agenda becomes useless if you don’t stick to it during the meeting. Try not to bounce back and forth between agenda items but rather stick to the priorities you established earlier.Stick to your timeboxes. It absolutely helps release some tension and lighten the mood if you have a bit of small talk or a quick check-in at the beginning of your meeting. That’s why you should allocate three to five minutes to this—and stick to the timeframe. Pictures of Kabir’s son’s adorable Halloween costume can be shared elsewhere so you have enough time to reach your meeting’s goals now.Designate a note taker. At the beginning of the meeting, designate a note taker who will write down any questions, feedback, tasks, and ideas that come up during the meeting. You can rotate this position so everyone on your team gets to contribute at some point. Ideally, these notes are taken in the same place as the meeting agenda—this will make it a lot easier for team members to follow the notes and link them to agenda items. Notes can also be directly entered into Asana for real-time updating and trackingFollow up after the meeting. Typically, the note taker will be responsible for following up with the meeting notes afterward. The notes should include any decisions that were made during the meeting, tasks that need to be completed, and questions that remained unanswered. If possible, assign teammates and add due dates to action items to keep accountability high. To ensure that these action items are tracked and completed, they should be promptly added to our Asana project management tool.Read: How to write a memo for effective communication (with template)Make the most out of every meetingWith Asana, you can keep your meeting agenda, meeting minutes, and meeting action items in one place. Effortlessly share the agenda with your team and assign agenda items in real time so nothing falls through the cracks.Streamlining your meetings with one central tool will reduce the amount of work about work your team faces, connect everyone to the purpose of the meeting, and allow for productive meetings everyone enjoys.Free customizable meeting agenda aluxum/Getty ImagesWe’ve all been in meetings where participants are unprepared, people veer off track, and the topics discussed are a waste of the team’s time. These problems — and others like them — stem from poor agenda design. An effective agenda sets clear expectations for what needs to occur before and during a meeting. It helps team members prepare, allocates time wisely, quickly gets everyone on the same topic, and identifies when the discussion is complete. If problems still occur during the meeting, a well-designed agenda increases the team’s ability to effectively and quickly address them. Download a blank agenda template (Microsoft Word) you can print and use. A meeting agenda helps you and your colleagues prepare for a meeting and guide yourselves through the items you need to discuss. Time spent in planning an agenda will likely save time for all meeting participants by providing a clear set of topics, objectives, and time frames. Some meetings may require more planning time than others. For example, a department-wide retreat will probably involve several hours of planning by several people, while a weekly staff meeting could be planned by one person in a shorter amount of time. A sample agenda with commentary on each section is below. Item Desired Outcome Priority Time Who How Project Updates share info high 50 Jack go-around Department Meeting Prep feedback for editing proposal high 20 Juanita feedback to proposal Vendor Fair seeking volunteers! medium 10 Lisa share info and needs 2018 Team Priorities get a shared view of our priorities and provide input for Li high 40 Ravi spend-a-dollar and discussion International Students Fair get list of ideas for preparing our participation medium 10 Jack brainstorm Action Items list actions, due date and person responsible high 10 Jack list items and get commitment Below are descriptions of the parts of an agenda, tips for helping them work, and additional resources for planning and facilitating effective meetings. Parts of an Agenda Additional Recommendations We recommend that groups use a flipchart during meetings to keep informed and to record agreements made. In addition, meetings generally go better when one person acts as facilitator. Tips There are other dimensions to planning effective meetings, but this simple agenda format offers a good foundation for a successful meeting. Here are three additional tips to supplement the specifics we've already outlined: Flexibility. At its best, a well planned meeting opens with a "planful guess" of how to handle the agenda. A smart facilitator checks with the group at the meeting's outset to see if important last-minute items need be added to the agenda and to negotiate and juggle the agenda to include them. Once underway you may find that an item requires more time, in which case you may negotiate for that during the meeting, or find a good stopping point before reaching your desired outcome. This choice, too, can be decided by negotiation with the meeting participants. Preparation. Deciding the who, how, time, priority and desired outcome for each item requires preparation. The greater the preparation, the greater the probability of a successful outcome during the meeting. Shared Responsibility. Whether the item owner, facilitator, group leader, or group member plans a good meeting, collaborative effort is key -- before, during, and after the event itself. With collaborative effort, a meeting becomes an integral part of each person's productivity and satisfaction. The agenda indicates what will be done at the meeting. The agenda makes sure that a meeting stays on track and that everyone knows what is happening and what is going to happen next. Without an agenda, a meeting can rapidly become chaotic and important business may not be completed. Meetings should start on time with one rap of the gavel followed by the Chair saying, “The meeting will come to order.” The call to order is not an actual part of the agenda itself, but rather the signal that the agenda will now begin. For many organizations the first item on the agenda is some sort of opening ceremony, which serves to get everyone together and ready to start the business of the meeting. Such ceremonies might include an invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, an inspiration, or welcome and introductions. However, if that is not the tradition in your organization, it is not required. The next step in the meeting is to determine if there is a quorum present (the number of members required to be present to conduct the meeting). Determining a quorum is the job of the chair who may do this by having members sign-in, or by asking the secretary to call the roll. The sign-in and roll call also serves as a method for the secretary to capture the names of those present at the meeting for the minutes. The adoption of the agenda is a customary practice by many organizations, especially recommended for those who do not meet frequently, or those who send out draft agendas in advance of meetings. At the meeting, members may modify the agenda before adopting it. Once adopted it becomes the order of business for the meeting. Once the above is completed the agenda officially begins. The standard order of business according to RONR (11th ed.) is as follows: Minutes Reports of officers, boards and standing committees Special committee reports Special orders Unfinished business New business This order of business is easily remembered with the memory device MRS SUN. This tells the items that will be covered as well as the order in which they will be covered. Minutes: It is not necessary for the chair to ask for a motion to approve the minutes. The chair asks for corrections and those that are required are then made. The minutes can then be accepted by unanimous consent. The chair says, “If there is no objection, the minutes will be adopted as presented (or as corrected).” The chair pauses to see if there is an objection and then says, “Seeing no objections, the minutes are adopted.” Reports: These reports may be oral or written. In some organizations where the number and length of the reports would require too much time, the report is given in written form to all the members and the officer or committee simply says that everything is in the written report. The officer or committee may make special comments about particular items that are important or were too new to be included. This is often the procedure at the annual meeting. Special Committee Reports: Special committees were created for a particular purpose. Once they give their final report and whatever recommendations are appropriate, they automatically cease to exist since they don’t have a function any more. Motions that come from recommendations from committee reports do not require a second as long as the committee had more than one member, since it is clear that more than one person supports the making of the motion. Special Orders: Special orders are items of business that have been defined as special orders at a previous meeting or something that is required by the bylaws to occur at a particular meeting (e.g. elections at the annual meeting). More information on what makes an item of business a special order can be found in RONR (11th ed.) p.185-188 and p.364-365. Unfinished business: This agenda item is where those things that are “left over” from previous meetings are handled. The organization should take care of this business before starting on new things. One common error is to name unfinished business “Old Business.” Some groups have a hard time distinguishing what old business is. This can result in long discussions about what is new and what is old. Unfinished business should be limited to items that have not been finished but were started at an earlier meeting and were postponed or not completed before adjournment, or were set as a general order to be taken up at this meeting. New Business: This is where business is started. A main motion is introduced to start this process. Each item is completed before the next one is started, but each item is completed in the same manner by starting with a main motion on a particular issue. When the business is completed, there are some other items that the organization may need to accomplish at the meeting. This is where announcements can be made and where the program may be included. For example, in parliamentary units, this is where an educational lesson is included. The meeting is recessed in order to have the scheduled educational program. After the program is completed, there may be closing activities or announcements and then adjournment. One reason to wait until after the program is formally adjourned is that there may be other business that members wish to bring before the assembly, which was inspired by the content of the program. The Michigan State University Extension Government and Public Policy team offers training for elected and appointed officials for improved effectiveness in several areas, including various public policy issues and effects of government programs, regulation, incentives, strategies and more. By working together with local elected and appointed officials, and interested citizens, MSU Extension is able to provide education on critical local and state issues. The Michigan State University Extension Government and Public Policy team offers professional training in Parliamentary Procedure and additional resources located at The Parliamentary Procedure Resources Page. Please tell us why? Team meetings are an integral part of every organization’s workflow. While they provide an avenue for efficient information dissemination and decision-making, meeting agendas act as directors running the show behind the scenes. They are the blueprint that shapes the discussions, sets priorities, and propels productivity. Unproductive team meetings often occur due to ambiguous agenda items, redundant talking points, poor time allocation, and lack of employee input in the meeting planning process.Without a proper and inclusive team meeting agenda, there’s the risk of staff meetings being unnecessarily long and not as effective. A properly structured meeting plan helps avoid this by steering the course of staff briefings towards productive outcomes, guaranteeing that meeting participants follow the talking points throughout the meeting.In this article, we’ll examine the critical role that meeting agendas play in ensuring efficient and effective meetings. We’ll also highlight well-proven tips for creating effective staff meeting agendas. Before these specifics, let’s explore meeting agendas.What Is a Meeting Agenda?A meeting agenda is a structured meeting plan containing information on specific meeting modalities, including date, time, discussion topics, and corresponding time allocations. It could also include information on the documents that should be available at the meeting.It’s good practice for meeting agendas to be prepared beforehand and shared with employees before the proposed meeting date. This ensures employees come into weekly check-ins prepared and ready to engage in constructive conversations. According to this study, employees spend an average of 31 hours on unproductive meetings monthly. So, through the structure of meeting agendas in company meetings, teams can prevent time wastage and preserve attentiveness during meetings. A well-drafted business meeting agenda is highly beneficial to the productivity drive of an organization and specifies the meeting's purpose. The more detailed it is, the better its ability to guarantee meeting effectiveness. A properly structured meeting agenda contains the following essential components:Meeting ObjectivesDiscussion Topics with Their Respective Time AllotmentsA Section on Challenges and ObstaclesTime Slots for Questions and AnswersClosing StatementThis is central to the creation of team meeting agendas. Every meeting must have a goal it intends to achieve, and the lead needs to state this in the agenda. Doing so gives meeting participants a good picture of what to expect, enabling them to prepare accordingly. The goals of a meeting are defined by what the meeting intends to achieve, expected meeting outcomes, and proposed action plans following the meeting's conclusion. It’s good practice to use a meeting agenda template to effectively navigate the process of creating a meeting plan. Here’s a meeting agenda sample by Assembly to use.Discussion Topics with Respective Time AllotmentsA meeting agenda must also feature the topics of conversation along with the time slots for each point of discourse. This gives employees a good idea of how long the meeting will last.In meeting topics, you can detail recent company developments, new hirings, new projects, and upcoming business events. Also, make time within the agenda for employees to give progress reports on tasks and projects, particularly those with almost-due deadlines. Here’s a detailed template by Assembly on how to structure this meeting section effectively. A Section on Challenges and ObstaclesCompany meetings aren’t complete without solving problems. If they fail to address lingering productivity issues, they’re simply time-wasting activities. Hence, this section is a crucial sales meeting agenda item.It allows employees to highlight hurdles encountered during project execution and while carrying out tasks. This section provides a prime opportunity for employees to rub minds together on practical ways to solve these obstacles. Time Slots for Questions and AnswersThere will always be areas of workflow that employees might need further clarification on, so don’t deny employees the perfect opportunity to obtain their desired answers.Include a question and answer session in the meeting agenda. A question and answer session ensures important areas of discourse are covered during the meeting, just in case you left them out while creating the agenda.After deliberations, there should be a closing segment where managers can review all the discussions and offer encouragement to employees. In this segment, special commendations and recognitions can be presented to deserving employees. What Is the Purpose of Meeting Agendas?A board meeting agenda principally functions to provide organization to meetings. It introduces a sequential flow into the conduct of meetings and adequately gets employees set for the meeting. A robust and comprehensive staff meeting agenda serves the following purposes:Time-managementAccountabilityEngagement and ParticipationTime is money. That’s why unproductive meetings cost an organization time and value. By having specific time durations for every aspect of a staff meeting, an agenda ensures meetings run within a specified timeframe without losing the essence of the meeting. The time-management features of meeting agendas spur employees’ interest and participation. Assigning tasks without proper follow-up is counterproductive. It either ends up not being done or partially carried out. A meeting agenda can help teams leverage routine company meetings as accountability sessions. This can be achieved by including employee progress reports as part of the meeting agenda items, allowing them to oblige for their actions. It also ensures other team members stay updated on any headway made in assigned projects.Since it’s usual to have an action plan drawn up following staff meetings, having employees provide situation reports on delegated responsibilities ensures that all essential resolutions reached in a meeting have clear next steps.If employees know they’ll always need to give timely reports, they will be more inclined to carry out their duties promptly, conclusively, and effectively.Engagement and ParticipationWhen turnout is low, and participants’ contributions are non-inspiring, a meeting achieves little.Engagement and participation are key determinants of a meeting's success. This stems from the fact that for a meeting to be effective, communication in a meeting should always be bidirectional. A well-crafted meeting agenda serves the purpose of ensuring maximal employee engagement and participation in meetings.Ideally, proper communication, including giving employees sufficient heads-up before a meeting, gives them a clear picture, allowing them to naturally work towards showing up prepared. How Do You Create An Effective Meeting Agenda?If you’ve read up till this point, you’ll agree that creating an agenda is crucial to planning a meeting, and the meeting agenda is a vital determinant of meeting outcomes.So, how do you create a practical meeting agenda?Here are well-proven tips for creating effective meeting agendas. They include:Establish a Clear Meeting GoalHave Employees Contribute Their Input to the Meeting AgendaPresent Agenda Items in an Organized FormatHave a Participant List and Assign ResponsibilitiesLeverage Artificial Intelligence (AI)Establish a Clear Meeting GoalA clear meeting goal is necessary to help inform the agenda's discussion topics and action items. It forms the basis of what each action item intends to achieve, whether to obtain information, seek employees’ opinions, or make decisions. A well-defined meeting objective serves as a yardstick to assess the success of a meeting. It is safe to conclude that a meeting is productive if its objectives are achieved, and all conversations are centered around the meeting agenda.Have Employees Contribute Their Input to the Meeting AgendaThis is a way of getting employees involved in the planning process. It signals to an organization’s workforce how significant they are in fulfilling company objectives. It’s also a means of addressing the possibility of employees’ non-participation and engagement. Providing employees with the agenda days before the proposed meeting date enables them to adequately preview the agenda and make any necessary inputs that can help make it more effective. To make it more seamless, use a meeting agenda like Assembly. Assembly allows managers to work collaboratively with employees to craft real-time meeting agendas.Present Agenda Items in a Well-organized FormatThe principles of effective agenda format entail that all agenda items are specific, unambiguous, and presented in order of priority. This implies that you introduce each item using action verbs. For instance, instead of saying ‘Brand identity, ' use the term ‘Discuss brand identity, ' this adds more clarity.It also entails that agenda items involving information dissemination should occupy top positions on the list and should be immediately followed by pressing issues to allocate more discussion time. This guarantees that going into deliberations, employees have all the necessary information.A good agenda format involves listing discussion topics as questions. This method perfectly sets the stage for brainstorming, encouraging employees to think critically.Have a Participant List and Assign ResponsibilitiesThough a well-thought-out meeting objective is essential, its success hinges on having the proper people present to address issues. It’s not just about having everyone in the meeting but ensuring key stakeholders are present to discuss matters arising and contribute their relevant insights. Deciding on smaller meeting groups is an economically wise choice as they boast higher engagement, resulting in faster decision-making. To ensure full participation, assign specific duties or action items to attendees and inform them beforehand to be well-prepared. This approach guarantees a hitch-free meeting. Leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI)AI has come to stay. Since its inception, it’s been revolutionizing daily work operations. One of its notable applications is the creation of meeting agendas.Leveraging AI to create meeting plans is seamless. For most, you can input the meeting objectives, and the tool automatically generates a comprehensive list of discussion topics and action items congruent with these objectives.These tools ensure that all the necessary items to fulfill the purpose of a meeting are captured within its agenda.A great place to begin is with the Assembly Meeting Agenda Template. What Are Common Mistakes to Avoid with Meeting Agendas?Poorly prepared meeting agendas lead to time wastage and dissatisfaction for employees and team managers. Avoid these common mistakes when drafting a meeting agenda:Including too many or too few agenda itemsNo clear agenda formatNo clear roles or responsibilitiesNo feedback or evaluationsAbsence of icebreakersIncluding too Many or too Few Agenda ItemsFinding a balance is always key. When there are too many agenda items, the meeting becomes exhausting and unfocused. There’s also the risk of hastily addressing each item to save time. Similarly, fewer agenda items result in shorter, more often vague meetings.A balanced approach will prioritize the most pressing issues and allocate sufficient time for discussion. Within the agenda, a section where employees can bring up issues unrelated to the meeting objectives is important. All discussion topics relating to the meeting objectives should be addressed within the proposed meeting time frame. A structureless meeting agenda is a precipitant for adverse outcomes. When a meeting agenda has a clear format, the meeting needs more fluidity and coherence. Without a clear agenda format, participants are at a loss on how events in a meeting will unfold, how the meeting will transition from one discussion to the other, and the meeting resolutions. To avoid this, you should apply a standard meeting agenda format when creating one.No Clear Roles and ResponsibilitiesIt’s not proper for employees to be randomly asked to take up specific roles during a meeting without prior heads-