



MEETING IN ENGLISH

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MEETING IN ENGLISH

Whether you are holding a meeting or attending a meeting. A successful meeting has no surprises. With proper preparation and careful organization, a meeting can run smoothly. The most typical complaint about meetings is that they run too long. Meetings that run longer than necessary can be very costly to a company or business. The most typical complaint about meetings is that they run too long. Meetings that run longer than necessary can be very costly to a company or business.



MEETING IN ENGLISH

As the famous business expression says: Time is money. Setting goals and time limits, keeping to the agenda, and knowing how to refocus, are key components of an effective meeting. This may sound simple in your own native language, but it is a little trickier when you or the participants do not speak fluent English



SCENARIO

The following pages will be based on the meeting of a fictional company called Paris Tours. The owner of the small tour company is Pierre. He has ten employees, including four supervisors, Kana and Thomas (guides), Nolan (driver), and Jane (receptionist). These four supervisors will be called to a meeting to discuss the upcoming tourist season. Follow through the pages to watch how Pierre prepares for and holds the meeting, and how his staff participate.

PREPARING FOR A MEETING

CALLING A MEETING

There are a number of ways that you may call or be called to a meeting. Some meetings are announced by e-mail, and others are posted on bulletin boards. If a meeting is announced at the end of another meeting, it is important to issue a reminder. A reminder can also come in the form of an e-mail or notice. Verbal announcements or reminders should always be backed up by documented ones. The date, location, time, length, and purpose of the meeting should be included. It is also important to indicate exactly who is expected to attend, and who is not. If you are planning on allocating someone to take on a certain role, make personal contact with that person to inform them of his or her duty.





CALLING A MEETING

MEETING

LOCATION: Room 3

DATE: Friday, May 5th

TIME: 2:00 PM-4:00 P.M.

FOR: Supervisors only

SUBJECT: Tourist Season

ATTENDANCE IS

MANDATORY

To: jane@paristours.com
cc: kana@paristours.com; thomas@paristours.com;
nolan@paristours.com

From: pierre@paristours.com

Subject: Meeting

Hi Everyone,

We will be having a meeting next Friday from 2:00 PM-4:00 PM in Room 3.

All supervisors are expected to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to

discuss the upcoming tourist season. As you probably have heard, this

could be our busiest season to date. There are already twenty bus tours

booked from Japan, and fifteen walking tours booked from North America.

We are also expecting Korean and Australian tours in late summer. Please

make arrangements to have other staff members cover your duties during the meeting.

Thank you,

Pierre

WRITING AN AGENDA

In order to keep the meeting on task and within the set amount of time, it is important to have an agenda. The agenda should indicate the order of items and an estimated amount of time for each item. If more than one person is going to speak during the meeting, the agenda should indicate whose turn it is to "have the floor". In some cases, it may be useful to forward the agenda to attendees before the meeting. People will be more likely to participate in a meeting, by asking questions or offering feedback, if they know what is going to be covered.



AGENDA



- Welcome, Introduction: Pierre and Stella (5 minutes)
- Minutes from previous meeting: Jane (10 minutes)



- Japan Tours: Pierre (15 minutes)
- N.A. Tours: Pierre (15 minutes)
- Korean Tours: Pierre (15 minutes)



- Australian Tours: Pierre (if time allows 10 minutes)
- Feedback from last year: Everyone (15 minutes)



- Vote on staff picnic: Everyone (15 minutes)
- Questions/Closing remarks/Reminders: Everyone (5 minutes)



ALLOCATING ROLES

The person in charge of calling and holding a meeting may decide to allocate certain roles to other staff members. Someone may be called upon to take the minutes, someone may be asked to do roll call, and someone may be asked to speak on a certain subject. This should be done either in person, or in an e-mail



ALLOCATING ROLES

Sample Personal Request:

Pierre: Hi Jane, did you get the e-mail about next week's meeting?

Jane: Yes, I'll be there.

Pierre: Great. I'd like to put you in charge of reviewing the minutes from last meeting for us.

Jane: Sure, I can do that. I think there is a copy of the minutes in my file.

Pierre: Thanks, you'll have ten minutes to remind us of what we discussed last meeting. This will be good for Stella to hear. Stella will be our new private tours coordinator.



OPENING A MEETING

Small Talk

Whether you are holding the meeting or attending the meeting it is polite to make small talk while you wait for the meeting to start. You should discuss things unrelated to the meeting, such as weather, family, or weekend plans



OPENING A MEETING

Sample Dialogue:

Pierre: Hi Thomas. How are you?

Thomas: Great thanks, and you?

Pierre: Well, I'm good now that the warm weather has finally arrived.

Thomas: I know what you mean. I thought winter was never going to end.

Pierre: Have you dusted off your golf clubs yet?

Thomas: Funny you should ask. I'm heading out with my brother-in-law for the first round of the year on Saturday.



WELCOME

Once everyone has arrived, the chairperson, or whoever is in charge of the meeting should formally welcome everyone to the meeting and thank the attendees for coming.

- Well, since everyone is here, we should get started.
- Hello, everyone. Thank you for coming today.
- I think we'll begin now. First I'd like to welcome you all.
- Thank you all for coming at such short notice.
- I really appreciate you all for attending today.
- We have a lot to cover today, so we really should begin



WELCOME

Sample Welcome:

- **Pierre:** I think we'll begin now. First I'd like to welcome you all and thank everyone for coming, especially at such short notice. I know you are all very busy and it's difficult to take time away from your daily tasks for meetings.

INTRODUCTIONS

If anyone at the meeting is new to the group, or if there is a guest speaker, this is the time when introductions should be made. The person in charge of the meeting can introduce the new person, or ask the person to introduce him or herself.

-I'd like to take a moment to introduce our new tour coordinator.

-I know most of you, but there are a few unfamiliar faces.

-Stella, would you like to stand up and introduce yourself?

-Hi everyone. I'm Judy Strauss. I'll be acting as Amanda's assistant while Nancy is away on maternity leave.



ROLL CALL/APOLOGIES

If the meeting is a small group, it is probably unnecessary to take attendance out loud. The person who is taking the minutes will know everyone personally and can indicate who is present and who is absent. In a larger meeting, it may be necessary to send around an attendance sheet or call out names. If an important figure is absent, it may be necessary for the chairperson to apologize for his or her absence and offer a brief explanation for it.



ROLL CALL/APOLOGIES

- It looks like everyone is here today.
- If you notice anyone missing, please let Jane know so that she can make a note of it.
- Unfortunately, Ken cannot join us today. He has been called away on business
- Mike will be standing in to take the minutes today, as Lisa is home with the flu.



OBJECTIVES

Some people who hold meetings prefer to pass around copies of the agenda, and others will post a large copy on a wall, or use an overhead projector. No matter which format is used, attendees should be able to follow the agenda as the meeting progresses. Before beginning the first main item on the agenda, the speaker should provide a brief verbal outline the objectives.



OBJECTIVES

Sample Introduction to the Agenda:

Pierre: As you can all see here on the agenda we will be mainly talking about the upcoming tourist season. First we'll discuss the groups that will be coming in from Japan. After that we'll discuss the North American Tours, followed by the Korean tours. If time allows we will also discuss the Australian tours which are booked for early September. Next, I'm going to request some feedback from all of you concerning last year's tours and where you think we can improve. And finally, we'll be voting on where and when to have this year's staff picnic.

FOLLOWING THE AGENDA

TAKING THE MINUTES



Anyone, including you, may be assigned to take the minutes at a meeting. Often someone who is not participating in the meeting will be called upon to be the minute-taker.



Before a meeting the minute-taker should review the following:

- The minutes from previous meeting
- All of the names of the attendees (if possible)
- The items on the agenda

FOLLOWING THE AGENDA

TAKING THE MINUTES

It also helps to create an outline before going to the meeting. An outline should include the following:

- A title for the meeting
- The location of the meeting
- A blank spot to write the time the meeting started and ended
- The name of the chairperson
- A list of attendees that can be checked off (or a blank list for attendees to sign)
- A blank spot for any attendees who arrive late or leave early

FOLLOWING THE AGENDA

TAKING THE MINUTES

The minute-taker can use a pen and paper or a laptop computer and does not need to include every word that is spoken.

It is necessary to include important points and any votes and results. Indicating who said what is also necessary, which is why the minute-taker should make sure to know the names of the attendees.

If you cannot remember someone's name, take a brief note of their seating position and find out their name after the meeting. A minute-taker should type out the minutes immediately after the meeting so that nothing is forgotten.

WATCHING THE TIME

One of the most difficult things about holding an effective meeting is staying within the time limits.

A good agenda will outline how long each item should take.

A good chairperson will do his or her best to stay within the limits.



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WATCHING THE TIME

Here are some expressions that can be used to keep the meeting flowing at the appropriate pace:

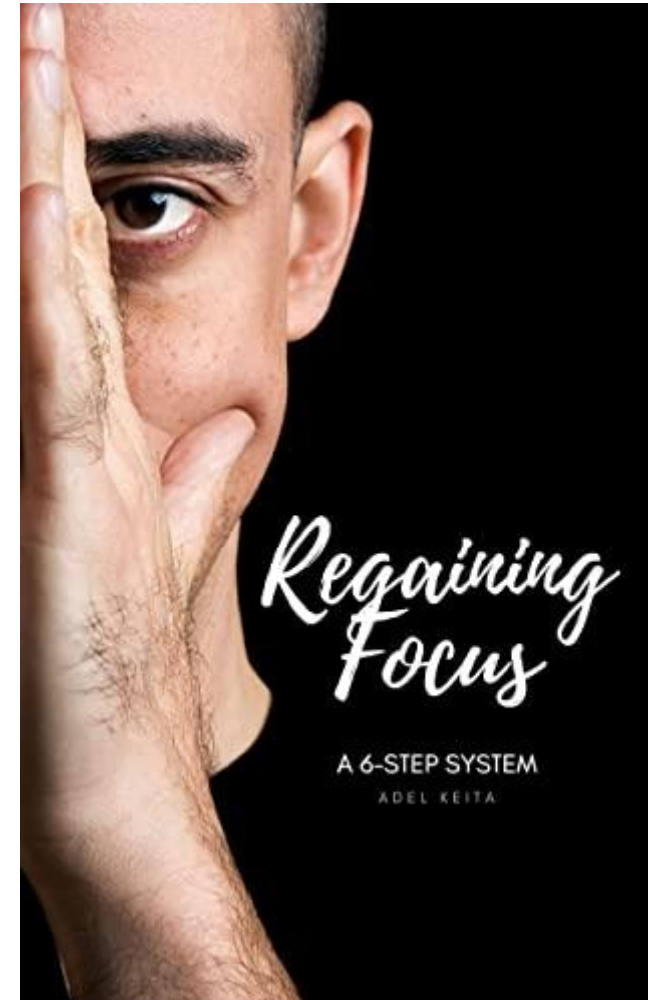
- I think we've spent enough time on this topic.
- We're running short on time, so let's move on.
- We're running behind schedule, so we'll have to skip the next item.
- We only have fifteen minutes remaining and there's a lot left to cover.
- If we don't move on, we'll run right into lunch.
- We've spent too long on this issue, so we'll leave it for now.
- We'll have to come back to this at a later time.



REGAINING FOCUS

It is easy to get off topic when you get a number of people in the same room. It is the chairperson's responsibility to keep the discussion focused. Here are some expressions to keep the meeting centered on the items as they appear on the agenda:

- Let's stick to the task at hand, shall we?
- I think we're steering off topic a bit with this.
- I'm afraid we've strayed from the matter at hand.
- You can discuss this among yourselves at another time.





VOTING

When issues cannot be resolved or decisions cannot be easily made, they are often put to a vote.

Most votes occur during meetings. Votes can be *open*, where people raise their hands in favour or in opposition of the issue.

In an open vote, the results are evident immediately. Other votes, such as who should be elected to take on a certain role, are private or *closed*.

During private votes, attendees fill out ballots and place them in a box to be counted. The results may not be counted until after the meeting.

Here are some specific expressions used during open voting:

- All in favour?
(Those who agree raise their hands or say "Aye".)
- All opposed?



VOTING

When a motion is voted and agreed upon it is *carried*. When it is voted and disagreed upon it is *failed*. Most often votes are put to a majority. If there is a tie vote, the chairperson will often cast the deciding vote.

- Sample Voting Session:

Pierre: Okay, now that we've covered most of the business, it's time to vote on the staff picnic. Jane and I have come up with two different ideas. I'll give Jane the floor now, and she'll outline these two options. After that we'll vote. I don't think there is any reason to have a private vote, so I'll just ask to see a show of hands. Jane, would you do the honours?



VOTING

Jane: Thanks Pierre. Okay, so, as you all probably assumed, we are going to wait until most of the tours have passed through before we have the staff picnic. That way most of you should be able to attend. So we've chosen the last Sunday of September. I hope that works out for all of you. Now, the first option is to have a BBQ at Mariposa Beach. We would do this on the last Sunday of September. The second option is to have a potluck dinner/pool party in Pierre's backyard. The only problem with this is if it rains, there isn't much in the way of shelter there. I don't think Pierre and his wife will want all of us dashing inside in a thunderstorm.



VOTING

Pierre: Well, if we had to we could probably squeeze everyone in the basement. Anyhow, those are the options, so let's put it to a vote. All in favour of option number one? Raise your hands please...okay, one vote. And, all in favour of option number two? That's four. Okay, so it looks like a pool party at my house.

Jane: Great. I'll put up a sign up sheet and everyone can write down what they plan to bring.

CLOSING A MEETING

Wrapping Up

There are different Timereasons why a meeting comes to an end. may run out, or all of the items in the agenda may be checked off. Some meetings will end earlier than expected and others will run late. The odd time, a meeting may be cut short due to an unexpected problem or circumstance.

Here are a variety of ways to adjourn a meeting:

- It looks like we've run out of time, so I guess we'll finish here.
- I think we've covered everything on the list.
- I guess that will be all for today.



Reminders

There is almost always one last thing to say, even after the closing remarks. A chairperson might close the meeting and then make a last-minute reminder. Instructions for tidying up the room may also be mentioned.

- Oh, before you leave, please make sure to sign the attendance sheet.
- I almost forgot to mention that we're planning a staff banquet next month.
- Don't forget to put your ballot in the box on your way out.



Thank You's and Congratulations

The end of the meeting is also the time to thank anyone who has not been thanked at the beginning of the meeting, or anyone who deserves a second thank you.

Congratulations or Good-luck can also be offered here to someone who has experienced something new, such as receiving a promotion, getting married, or having a baby.

- Before I let you go let's all give a big thank you (*everyone claps*) to Thomas for baking these delicious cookies.
- Again, I want to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here today.



Follow Up

In the closing remarks, the chairperson, or participants may want to discuss the date and time for the next meeting, when the minutes will be available, or when a decision should be made by. This is also the time to give contact information, such as how to send a question by e-mail or who to call regarding a certain issue.

- We'll meet again on the first of next month.
- Next time we meet I'll be sure to have those contacts for you.

