

The six stages of a meeting

We know that good (or poor) processes will impact on the overall effectiveness of a meeting. Here's how to get it right at all six stages of a meeting.

1. Preparation

What can be done beforehand to help the meeting run well?

- Agendas and pre-reading sent a minimum 3 days before a meeting.
- Meeting reminder a couple of days before meeting.
- Any necessary information gathered and available.

2. Gathering

Allow time for people to interact socially and settle in.

- Do new people need to be welcomed and introduced?
- Is tea, coffee and/or water available?
- It is often a good idea to set a gathering time and a meeting time (eg 5.30pm for 5.45pm).

3. Orientation

Who are we and why are we here?

- Do you need to do a roundtable introduction?
- Do a quick agenda review asking for any additional agenda items.
- Confirm break and finish times.

4. Structuring

How the group functions should be clear – do not make assumptions that everyone is on the same page, especially new people.

- Are people clear on roles and responsibilities?
- Are people clear on process and procedures?
- Is there a clear understanding of consensus decision making?

5. Constructive work

This is where the majority of the meeting time is spent. This is where the work is done. This is where the preparation will have an impact (refer to *The 4 P's of effective meetings*).

6. Completion

This is a very important part of the meeting.

- Summarise decisions and who is responsible.
- Set the next meeting time.
- Make plans to deal with unfinished business.
- End on a high or positive note.

Source: *The Change Agency: Effective Facilitation*