

The 4 P's of effective meetings

Purpose

What is the purpose of your network meeting? A meeting with a mix of all the below will have energy and will be sustainable. Those present will find something of interest.

- Sharing information
- Reporting
- Making decisions
- Building a sense of community
- All of the above

Preparation

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are the right people in the room?
- Are they sufficiently informed?
- Did everyone have an opportunity to submit to the agenda?
- Do you have all the equipment you need (whiteboard, butchers paper, teleconf facilities etc)?
- Did everyone receive minutes, agenda, a reminder and any pre-readings?
- Are all the necessary reports in – especially from those people unable to attend?
- Are refreshments prepared?

Process

A balance needs to be struck between getting through the business (the TASK dimension)¹ and paying attention to the needs of and relationships between people (the MAINTENANCE dimension)².

- What level of formality and structure is needed?
- Who plays what roles? Are these appropriate?
- Can roles be rotated?
- Do you need group agreements?
- What sort of group culture are you building?

1. TASK dimension – getting through the business, achieving the purpose

2. MAINTENANCE dimension – people enjoying themselves, having their needs met, building group spirit.

Practical action

At the end of the meeting check the following:

- Were there clear agreed outcomes and actions?
- Is there an understanding of who is going to do what and by when?
- When can members expect the minutes?
- Has the date for the next meeting been set?

Source: *The Change Agency: Effective Facilitation*