



## **Session aims**

- **How to structure a meeting**
- **Common pitfalls and how to avoid them**
- **How to contribute constructively**
- **The art of Minute-taking**
- **Following up on actions: key points**

# Meetings cost

- The average worker:
  - *attends 3.7 meetings every week*
  - *spends one hour nine minutes preparing for each meeting and one hour 22 minutes attending it*
  - *is spending more than a day preparing for, and attending meetings*
- Across a 40 year career, this equates to a total of 17,470 hours: two entire years of someone's life or approx ten years of work time
- *Source: MeetingSquared*

# Is a meeting required?

- Purpose = make decisions & identify actions
- NOT for only information sharing unless of a sensitive nature
- If a message needs to be conveyed to a number of staff, send out a bulletin
- Consider if the issue can be discussed on phone/via email

# Meeting basics

- **Appoint a meeting co-ordinator or facilitator**
- **Appoint a Chair or Facilitator**
- **Create agenda**
- **Decide who needs to be there**
- **When and where will it take place? Chairs?!**
- **How long should it last? Start and end on time**
- **Who will take minutes?**

# Common pitfalls

1. Too many or inappropriate agenda items
2. No decision-maker in attendance
3. Aimless discussion
4. Meeting starts late or over-runs
5. AOB becomes the main event

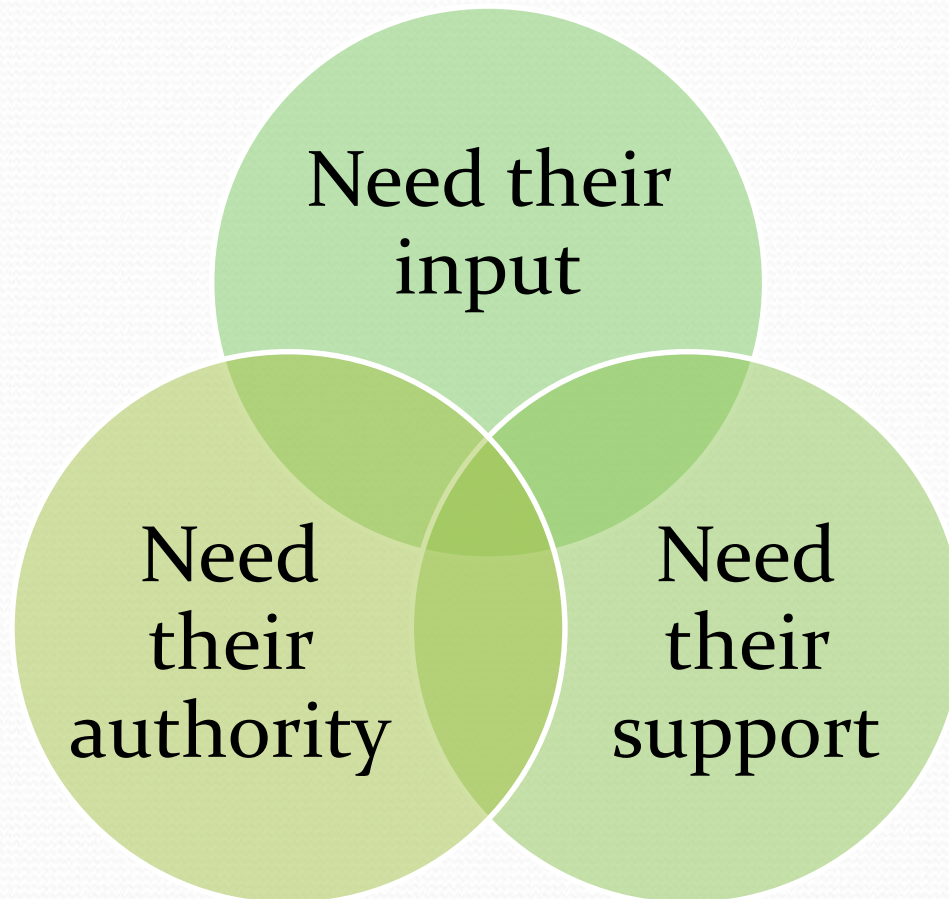
*“A meeting consists of a group of people who have little to say – until after the meeting.”*

P.K. Shaw

# Meeting co-ordinator tasks

- Issue invites
- Circulate meeting information to everyone prior to the meeting to include:
  - *meeting objectives*
  - *meeting agenda location/date/time*
  - *background information*
  - *assigned items for preparation*
  - *deadline for accepting agenda changes*

# Who needs to be there? Limit attendees!





A blue kingfisher perched on a branch, looking to the left. The bird has vibrant blue feathers on its head and back, with a white patch on its throat and a long, sharp beak. The background is dark and out of focus.

A Meeting is a deliberation where hours  
are wasted and minutes are recorded

- Anonymous  
Meeting Quotes

 [www.brainquotes.org](http://www.brainquotes.org)

# Meeting structure

- Depends on the nature of the meeting; level of formality
- **The Introduction**
- Welcome by the chairperson/facilitator
- Confidentiality agreed
- Minute taker notes attendees and any changes

# Agenda rules

- **Have one!**
- **Have timed agenda items**
- **Pre-circulate and ask for suggested changes before the meeting**
- **No additions - these are requested prior to the meeting**
- **Create a 'parking lot' for off-topic discussion**

## 2. Apologies for absence

- **Creates an accurate list of attendees on the day**
- **Substituting**
- **Not arrived**
- **Apologies**
- **Present**

### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

- To approve the minutes as an accurate record
- The only discussion should relate to: 'Are the minutes accurate?'
- Concentrate on errors of fact
- Minutes should have been read by members **BEFORE THE MEETING**
- The filed set of minutes should **NOT** be altered
- The chair to sign

## **4. Matters arising**

- **A quick progress review**
- **A confirmation that agreed actions have been completed**
- **An update from an item(s) in previous minutes**

## **5. Agenda Items**

- **The key topics for discussion at the meeting**
- **Agree actions at each item**

## **7. Any Other Business**

- **Defer to the next meeting**
- **Reject it**
- **Accept as genuine AOB**

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

- **Confirm the date of the next meeting**

## **9. Thank everyone for attending**

# minutes

- Should be read in under 5 minutes
- should ideally be a list of actions assigned and decisions made
- should leave no doubt as to who is responsible for what
- are saved and used for reference or background material for future meetings relating to the same topic
- Should be issued as soon as possible after the meeting



# Contributing constructively

- Review the agenda – bow out if no need for you to be there
- Read the attendee list: look up anyone unfamiliar
- Prepare your thoughts and decide what you want to say beforehand
- Arrive on time

# Contributing constructively

- No gadgets!
- Avoid side discussions
- Take notes for yourself (on paper)
- Be prepared to express your comments and retain self-control

# Following up: key points

- Delegates should leave the meeting clear as to what they are responsible for
- Do not assign an action to a person not in attendance
- If actions aren't being completed, the reasons need to be addressed, not discussed