

Facilitate Meetings So All Have a Voice

Have you attended meetings where one person takes over and never stops talking, while others don't contribute anything at all? What do you do if you are the one facilitating? Try some of these suggestions.



For those who talk too much...

- ◆ When you understand the point (s)he is making, say, "Thanks, we've got it"
- ◆ Don't make eye contact
- ◆ Hold up your hand to signal "Stop"
- ◆ Look at others when asking a question

For those who rarely or never participate...

- ◆ Tell them ahead of time you will expect a few words when you bring up topic X
- ◆ Ask them directly for an opinion or update
- ◆ When looking for responses, rest your eyes on the silent ones
- ◆ Thank them for their contributions

As the facilitator, learning to encourage equal participation will make the meetings more valuable and informative for everyone involved.

Employee Rewards

A hand-written note is always appropriate and always appreciated. Whether on company stationery or a suitable card, a few words of appreciation and thanks for the hard work of the individual will go a long way towards helping the employee feel like the efforts (s)he puts forth are worth it.

Hand-written is much more personal than typed or emailed. Being specific about the work or contribution is important, too. It shows that thought and effort were put into the expression of thanks.



Presentation Pointer: Grab their attention from the start

What's the point of giving a presentation if no one is paying attention? Whether before a large audience or a few people in a meeting, as a presenter you need to grab and hold the audience's attention from the second you stand before them until you have said what you need to say.

What you choose to say at the very beginning is one key to success. Statements such as "Good afternoon" or "Thank you for coming" are not attention grabbers. Instead, use something with impact. Start with:

- ◆ A powerful or funny quote
- ◆ An anecdote
- ◆ A personal story
- ◆ A controversial statement
- ◆ A tasteful joke

Something amusing, thought-provoking, or involving will grab the audience. They will be yours and will stay focussed on you for the rest of your presentation.

Quotes

"Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening."
—*Dorothy Sarnoff*

"The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."
—*William James*

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