

Effective Meeting Framework

Contents

Effective Meeting Framework.....	1
<i>Contents</i>	1
<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Effective Meetings</i>	2
Why are they Important?.....	2
<i>Key Principles of Effective Meeting Management</i>	3
What makes a meeting effective?.....	3
Before.....	3
During.....	6
After.....	7
Evaluate and Iterate.....	7
<i>Operation of Effective Meeting Management</i>	8
<i>Glossary</i>	9
Appendix A – Meeting Types Guidance.....	10

Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, having a clear framework which sets out the principles and guidelines for effective Meeting Management will help us effectively communicate and collaborate, to make informed decisions aligned with our company values and goals, which ultimately contributes to our overall success and productivity.

Effective Meetings

Why are they Important?

Effective meetings should leave the attendees energised and feeling like they have accomplished something. Reasons include:

Reason	Explanation
Time	Efficient meetings ensure that time is used productively. Unnecessary meetings or poorly organised meetings can waste time for everyone involved. For neurodivergent attendees it helps to set expectations and create structure.
Communication	Meetings provide a platform for clear and direct communication among team members. Effective meetings ensure that information is shared, questions are answered, and everyone is kept informed about relevant topics. Enabling that communication using different methodologies such as spoken, text, video, chat function creates a more inclusive environment. Ensuring that written communication is sent in accessible fonts enables people with visual processing differences to read and understand them better.
Decision Making	Meetings, particularly board meetings, create forums for relevant decision-making. When conducted effectively, meetings facilitate discussion, debate, and consensus-building, leading to informed decisions. Making sure all voices can be heard, even if opinions are different ensures the decision making process is more effective
Alignment	Meetings help ensure that everyone is aligned with the company's goals, objectives, and priorities. They provide a platform for leaders to convey important messages, clarify expectations, and reinforce the company's vision and values. The experiential reminder support executive function differences in neurodiverse people
Problem Solving	Complex problems or challenges sometimes require collaborative solutions. Meetings allow team members to brainstorm ideas, analyse issues, and develop strategies together. Effective meetings foster creativity and innovation, leading to better problem-solving outcomes.
Accountability	By discussing tasks, deadlines, and progress in meetings, team members hold each other accountable for their commitments. This accountability helps maintain momentum and ensures that projects stay on track.
Engagement	Well-organised and engaging meetings can boost morale and motivation among team members. When people feel that their input is valued and their voices are heard in meetings, they are more likely to feel engaged and committed to the company's goals.
Efficiency	Effective meetings are focused and productive, leading to efficient use of time and resources. By setting clear agendas, sticking to timelines, and avoiding unnecessary tangents, meetings can be conducted more efficiently. A key value for many Autistic people.

Key Principles of Effective Meeting Management

What makes a meeting effective?

Consider the principals of PAL (Purpose, Agenda & Length)

Purpose: or objective what are you aiming to get out of the meeting?

Agenda: how is the meeting planned to be organised as a flow to work towards and achieve the key objectives?

Length: Ensure the meeting time is appropriate to allow all to have time to express their thoughts for each item.

Along with the decision-making framework principle of [DIA](#).

If you structure your meeting and consider the Before, During and After, the result will be an effective meeting.

A list of different types of meetings and their benefits can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Before

Set a Clear Purpose/Objective

To help you determine what your meeting objective is, complete this sentence:

At the close of the meeting, we will need

Do you want a **decision**?

Do you want to **generate ideas**?

Are you **getting status reports**?

Are you **communicating** something?

Are you **making plans**?

With the end result clearly defined, you can then plan the contents of the meeting, and determine who needs to be present. Defining meetings in this way particularly helps Neurodiverse people as it gives a clear structure, goal to reach and helps inform the process. That clarity then removes levels of ambiguity.

Consider the audience

What do you want to get from each attendee? Consider [DIA](#) (Decision, Input, Awareness)

Who is the **decision** maker

Who will add **input** and value to the meeting objective?

Who needs to be there for **awareness**.

Consider their skills, experience and knowledge and respect the different people types to ensure they remain engaged.

Remember that a number of them could be Neurodiverse, don't expect the standard visual queues to engagement. If you are making sure that each delegate has options to speak and input to the topics you will know that they are engaged.

Create an Agenda

Develop a well-structured agenda and share it in advance.

Consider the following factors:

Priorities – what absolutely must be covered?

Results – what do you need to accomplish at the meeting?

Sequence – in what order will you cover the topics?

Timing – how much time will you spend on each topic, allowing for all to have a voice?

Date and time – when will the meeting take place? Bear in mind times zones

Place – where will the meeting take place and will it be in person, virtual or hybrid?

Participants – who needs to attend the meeting for it to be successful?

Inclusion - how have you fostered inclusivity and accessibility for all?

Consider what do the participants need to know to make the most of the meeting time? Could you send out a pre-read? Could you also request questions from the pre-read to enable those answering in the meeting time to process the questions? What role are they expected to perform in the meeting, so that they can do the right preparation.

Ask delegates at this point whether there are any adjustments that could be made within the setting to create a sense of ease for their participation.

Invite Relevant Participants

Only include individuals whose presence is essential ([DIA](#)). If you have participants that are needed for only part of the meeting, how will you let them know it is OK to leave without causing any offence. This prevents unnecessary disruptions and ensures that those present can actively contribute to the meeting's objectives.

Ensure there is a nominated person to lead the meeting and another to note decisions and actions.

Where possible, include the use of an AI notetaker, especially where the meeting is hybrid and ensure the notes are distributed to all after the meeting. These notes can also help any disabled attendee who might have a support worker's assistance with processing the meeting and scheduling any actions.

Provide the [agenda](#) within the meeting invite along with [meeting etiquette](#) requirements.

Embrace Technology

Utilise collaboration tools to streamline communication. Video conferencing, shared documents, and virtual whiteboards enhance engagement and enable remote participation, fostering a dynamic and inclusive environment. Inform participants at the beginning about how to indicate that they want to raise a point/answer a question, invite them to use the chat facility.

Know when to Cancel

Recognise when a meeting is unnecessary or can be better addressed through alternative means. Cancelling unproductive meetings demonstrates respect for everyone's time and maintains focus on meaningful work. If cancelling, ensure that as much notice as possible is given. For some Neurodiverse people, cancelling, particularly at short notice, creates a fear response and can mean they struggle to move on from what they had expected to be doing with their time.

Address Meeting Etiquette?

In addition to the criteria above, meetings should follow a set of "ground rules" or etiquette, that govern the way you behave.

Etiquette covers behaviours such as timekeeping; the use of laptops and mobile phones; eating and drinking; whether you can interrupt while someone is speaking, or only ask questions at the end; where you sit, and so on.

These rules will vary according to your management style, the topics to be discussed and the preferences of your team. And some meetings may be more formal than others, depending on the agenda and who is attending. But agreeing to these basic standards – and sticking to them – can help you and your team to conduct meetings in a more professional manner, and to achieve your objectives with the minimum of fuss or disruption.

Consider and advise within the [meeting invite](#):

- Can/must delegates be sent if the person invited cannot attend. Delegates should be someone that has the authority to make a decision or bring with them required updates.
- Pre actions or preparation to be completed before the meeting.
- Can information updates be provided instead of attendance?

During

Time Management

Time is a precious resource, and no one wants their time wasted. Streamline the meeting as much as possible.

Respect participants' time by starting and ending the meeting on schedule. Encourage concise contributions and address off-topic discussions by noting them for follow-up outside the meeting.

Set expectations

If the meeting is being recorded, inform participants at the start. This also applies if using AI to record the meeting notes.

Let people know how you will encourage participation either by using a raise hands online, or if in person those questions can be noted for a round robin discussion.

For longer meetings, let delegates know what the expectations are around food, drink and comfort breaks.

Let people know if they need to be on mute if online when someone else is speaking.

Inform people if there are likely to be breakout sessions and how these will be framed.

Ask delegates at this point whether there are any adjustments that could be made within the setting to create a sense of ease for their participation.

If there is a need to take a topic into a deep dive, consider taking the item offline from the meeting as an action point.

Encourage Participation

Create a culture of open communication. Encourage all participants to share their insights, ideas, and concerns. Ensure quieter team members have opportunities to contribute by actively seeking their input.

Use a round robin approach so that everyone who wants to add to input or query etc. has an opportunity to do so. Also invite feedback and the method you wish feedback to be given which enables anyone who doesn't feel confident within the meeting providing feedback an opportunity for their input to be heard.

Foster a Positive Environment

Set a positive and inclusive tone. Acknowledge contributions, express gratitude, and maintain a constructive atmosphere. Welcome differing opinions. A positive and inclusive environment enhances collaboration and creativity.

After

Follow Up with Action Items

Summarise key takeaways and action items at the end of the meeting. Clearly outline responsibilities and deadlines. This ensures accountability and provides a roadmap for moving forward. Ensure that actions are written up and circulated to all after the meeting, and progress monitored. Actions should be the first item considered at the next meeting.

Owners of actions are accountable for their actions and should ensure that they understand the objective of the action along with the required outcome. If the action is not clear it is the action owner's responsibility to raise this in the meeting or through direct feedback to clarify and/or understand timelines. Always keep the meeting organiser informed if things change.

Evaluate and Iterate

Regularly assess the effectiveness of your meetings. Gather feedback from participants and use it to refine your approach. Continuous improvement ensures that future meetings become increasingly productive. Some questions to think about: Are we discussing the right things? Are the right people there? Are we meeting too frequently/not often enough? Are the meetings too long/too short? Are the meetings working for anyone with neurodivergent differences and/or disabilities? Is there anything else we now need to be considering? Do we need to offer any other/more training?

Operation of Effective Meeting Management

Meeting organisers	Meeting participants
<p>You as a meeting organiser have the responsibility to ensure meetings are productive, efficient and achieve their intended goals. Your responsibilities span before, during and after the meeting with the level of preparation and co-ordination should be proportionate to the meeting type.</p>	<p>You as a meeting participant also have a responsibility for managing your time efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>You are responsible for ensuring that you arrive to each meeting fully prepared and able to contribute.</p>

Multi participant meetings - which include decision making, alignment and/or problem solving

Often referred to as management meetings, committee meetings or these serve various purposes depending on the context and the need. By understanding the specific purpose of each multi-participant meeting and managing them effectively, organisations can maximise the productivity and outcomes of their collaborative efforts.

Meeting organisers	Meeting participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan the meeting ensuring the right participants are in the meeting to meet the meeting's objective. <input type="checkbox"/> Hold the meeting ensuring it is effective, efficient and stays on track: <input type="checkbox"/> Minute the meeting, documenting key decision and further actions. <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use the Effective Meeting guidance. b. A Terms of Reference will help structure a more formal Governed meeting – See Terms of Reference TEMPLATE. c. Where decisions need to be made, use the Decision-Making Framework for structure guidance. d. If decisions are within the objective, consider sending a pre read to participants so that they can digest, prepare comments to make an informed decision. e. Use templates to keep the agenda and timelines flowing. f. Use the meeting templates or AI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pre read any pre-reading material provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are you the right participant for the meeting? If not feed that back. b. Use the Effective Meeting guidance to review and agree your purpose.

Single participant meetings

Single participant meetings, also known as one-on-one meetings, are unique because they focus entirely on direct interaction between two individuals. By considering these aspects, you can ensure that one-on-one meetings are productive, efficient, and beneficial for both participants.

Meeting organisers	Meeting participants
<p>Plan, hold and manage the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use the Effective Meeting - guidance. b. Ensure you have asked questions about how to make the meeting accessible 	<p>1. Prepare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use the Effective Meeting - guidance.

Information sharing meetings

Information sharing meetings are essential for disseminating updates, reporting progress, and ensuring everyone is aligned with current developments. By following these guidelines, you can manage information sharing meetings effectively, ensuring that all participants are well-informed, engaged, and aligned with the meeting's objectives.

Meeting organisers	Meeting participants
<p>Plan, hold and manage the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use the Effective Meeting - Guidance b. Ensure engagement with visual aids. 	<p>Plan, hold and engage in the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use the Effective Meeting Guidance

Glossary

Any specific words or phrases pertaining to the policy should be expanded on as required.

Term	Definition
Terms of Reference (TOR)	A document that outlines the objectives, agenda, roles and responsibilities technology and frequency. A well-defined TOR ensures that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of what is expected, which facilitates effective planning, execution, and evaluation.
Deep Dive	Intensive, thorough examination or discussion of a specific topic, issue, or aspect.
Offline	Discussing or addressing an issue, topic, or question outside the current meeting's time and scope.

Appendix A – Meeting Types Guidance

Meeting Type	Purpose	Benefits
Management Meetings	Management meetings serve as a crucial forum for leaders within the company to come together, discuss key issues, make decisions, and align strategies.	Management meetings are essential for driving company success by facilitating strategic planning, decision-making, operational review, problem-solving, communication, alignment, resource allocation, and team development. By leveraging these meetings effectively, they can navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve the desired goals.
Board meetings	Board meetings are essential gatherings where the governing body of a company convenes to oversee its activities, make decisions, and provide strategic direction.	Board meetings play a critical role in guiding and governing companies, ensuring they operate effectively, ethically, and in the best interests of stakeholders. By providing strategic direction, oversight, and decision-making, boards contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of a company.
Committee meetings	Committee meetings are gatherings of a subset of individuals within a company who are tasked with a specific area of responsibility or project.	Committee meetings play a valuable role in advancing the goals and objectives of organisations by providing a platform for focused discussion, task assignment, progress updates, decision making, information sharing, coordination, problem solving, feedback and evaluation, documentation, and support for decision making.
Shareholders meetings	Shareholders meetings are gatherings of the owners (shareholders) of a corporation, where they come together to discuss company matters, make important decisions, and elect members of the board of directors.	Shareholders meetings are essential for facilitating communication, decision making, accountability, engagement, proxy voting, transparency, compliance with legal requirements, and community building within corporations. These meetings serve as a key mechanism for ensuring that shareholders have a voice in company affairs and that management remains accountable to its owners.
Strategy meetings	Strategy meetings are gatherings where key stakeholders come together to discuss and develop the strategic direction of a company.	Strategy meetings play a critical role in guiding the long-term direction and success of organisations by facilitating strategic planning, goal setting, resource allocation, risk assessment and mitigation, innovation, cross-functional collaboration, decision making, communication and alignment, and continuous improvement.
Status meetings	Status meetings, also known as progress meetings or check-in meetings, are regular gatherings where team members provide updates on their work, discuss progress, address challenges, and coordinate tasks.	Status meetings play a crucial role in facilitating communication, coordination, accountability, problem-solving, feedback, decision making, celebration of achievements, documentation, and efficiency within teams. Regular status meetings help ensure that projects progress smoothly and that team members are supported in their work.
Information sharing meetings	Information sharing meetings, also known as knowledge-sharing meetings or update meetings, are gatherings where team members share relevant information, updates, insights, and best practices with one another.	Information sharing meetings play a valuable role in promoting collaboration, knowledge transfer, transparency, problem solving, innovation, professional development, relationship building, continuous improvement, and feedback within teams. By providing a platform for open communication and collaboration, these meetings contribute to the success and effectiveness of the team.
Brainstorming meetings	Brainstorming meetings are gatherings designed to generate creative ideas, solutions, or strategies for a specific problem, project, or initiative.	Brainstorming meetings are valuable tools for fostering creativity, collaboration, problem solving, innovation, and team building within organisations. By providing a structured yet open environment for idea generation and problem-solving, these meetings empower teams to tackle challenges creatively and develop innovative solutions.
One-on-one meetings	One-on-one meetings are private discussions between a manager and an individual team member. These meetings provide an	One-on-one meetings are valuable tools for building relationships, providing feedback and coaching, aligning on goals, supporting career development, solving problems, engaging employees, maintaining confidentiality, and

Meeting Type	Purpose	Benefits
	opportunity for personalised communication, feedback, coaching, and alignment on goals and priorities.	fostering accountability within organisations. These meetings contribute to the professional growth and success of individual team members while also driving overall team and organisational performance.
Big decision meetings	Big decision meetings are gatherings where key stakeholders come together to discuss, evaluate, and make significant decisions that have a substantial impact on the company.	Big decision meetings are critical for organisations to navigate complex challenges, seize opportunities, and make strategic choices that shape their future trajectory. By bringing together key stakeholders, fostering informed discussions, promoting collaboration, and ensuring accountability, these meetings contribute to effective decision making and organisational success.
Retrospective meetings	Retrospective meetings also known as retrospectives or post-mortems, are gatherings held at the end of a project, sprint, or time period to reflect on what went well, what could be improved, and how the team can work more effectively in the future.	Retrospective meetings play a crucial role in driving continuous improvement, fostering teamwork and collaboration, promoting open communication, celebrating successes, identifying patterns, empowering team members, generating actionable insights, building trust, and enhancing adaptability within teams. By incorporating retrospectives into their workflow, teams can maximise their effectiveness and achieve better outcomes over time.
Planning meetings	Planning meetings are gatherings where team members come together to discuss, strategize, and outline the goals, tasks, and actions needed to achieve specific objectives	Planning meetings play a crucial role in setting goals, aligning strategies, assigning tasks, allocating resources, assessing risks, developing timelines, establishing communication strategies, planning for contingencies, defining evaluation criteria, and driving continuous improvement within organisations. By providing a structured framework for planning and coordination, these meetings contribute to the success and effectiveness of projects and initiatives.
All-hands meetings	All-hands meetings, also known as company-wide meetings or town hall meetings, are gatherings that bring together all employees within an organisation, regardless of their role or department.	All-hands meetings play a critical role in fostering communication, alignment, transparency, trust, employee engagement, recognition, collaboration, cultural reinforcement, training and development, feedback and input, and a sense of community within organisations. By providing a forum for leadership to engage with employees directly, these meetings contribute to a positive and thriving organisational culture.
Innovation meetings	Innovation meetings are gatherings specifically designed to foster creativity, generate new ideas, and explore innovative solutions to challenges or opportunities within an organisation.	Innovation meetings play a crucial role in driving organisational innovation by fostering creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, risk-taking, customer-centricity, leadership support, iterative improvement, and a culture of innovation. By providing a dedicated space for creative exploration and experimentation, these meetings enable organisations to stay ahead of the curve and adapt to changing market dynamics.
Training meetings	Training meetings are gatherings focused on providing education, instruction, and skill development to employees within an organisation.	Training meetings play a vital role in developing employees' skills, knowledge, and capabilities, thereby supporting organisational growth, performance, and success. By providing structured learning opportunities and investing in employee development, organisations can empower their workforce to achieve their full potential and drive business results.
Crisis management meetings	Crisis management meetings are gatherings convened in response to emergencies, critical incidents, or unexpected events that pose significant threats to an organisation's operations, reputation, or stakeholders.	Crisis management meetings are critical for organisations to effectively respond to emergencies, protect their interests, and safeguard the well-being of their stakeholders. By convening promptly, coordinating efforts, making informed decisions, allocating resources, engaging stakeholders, communicating effectively, adapting to changing conditions, and learning from experience, organisations can mitigate the impact of crises and emerge stronger and more resilient in the aftermath.
Feedback meetings	Feedback meetings, also known as performance reviews, appraisal	Feedback meetings are essential for providing employees with the guidance, support, and direction they need to

Meeting Type	Purpose	Benefits
	meetings, or feedback sessions, are gatherings where managers provide feedback to employees on their performance, progress, and areas for improvement.	succeed in their roles. By fostering open communication, providing constructive feedback, setting clear expectations, and supporting employee development, organisations can enhance performance, engagement, and retention across their workforce. For neurodivergent people in particular, recognition needs to be given for 'how' they make something happen being different to expectations on people who are more neurotypical.
Client meetings	Client meetings are gatherings between representatives of a company and its clients to discuss business matters, address client needs, build relationships, and facilitate collaboration.	Client meetings are essential for fostering positive relationships, understanding client needs, providing value, addressing issues, exploring opportunities, collecting feedback, negotiating contracts, and maintaining ongoing communication with clients. By engaging in productive client meetings, companies can strengthen client relationships, drive customer satisfaction, and achieve business growth and success.
Coffee chats or Water Cooler conversations	A coffee chat is a 15 or 20 minute conversation between two people for the purpose of introducing themselves, having a general catch-up, and connecting as human beings.	Coffee chats are often overlooked as a type of meeting, when really, they are crucial to developing and maintaining an organisation's culture. They are a great way of getting to know people from across your organisation - many of whom you don't have the opportunity to interact with during your day-to-day work. Be aware that this type of unstructured meeting may be very difficult for many neurodivergent people.