

Leading Effective Meetings

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We are ambivalent about the value of meetings.

- “Meetings are indispensable when you don't want to do anything.” John Kenneth Galbraith
- “If the world could be saved by meetings, everyone would have converted a long time ago.” Mike Ballast
- “Meetings are a puzzling paradox. On one hand, they are critical. Meetings are the activity of every organization. On the other hand, they are painful. Frustratingly long and seemingly pointless.” Patrick Lencioni

In a democratic world, the right to call meetings and determine the agenda is a critical aspect of a leader's power.

Why have meetings when you can email and call?

- What can you do in a meeting that you cannot do by email or a phone call?
- In what situations would it be better to send out a general email?
- When is it better to talk to each person individually?

Meeting stew

Lencioni's 4 types of meetings

1. Daily Check-in
2. Weekly Tactical
3. Monthly Strategic
4. Quarterly Offsite

“The single biggest structural problem contributing to ineffective meetings is the tendency to throw every type of issue that needs to be discussed into the same meeting, like a bad stew with too many ingredients.”

Lencioni

Which of the 4 types of meetings do you need and how often?

1. Administrative - Share daily schedules and activities
2. Tactical - Review weekly activities and metrics, and resolve tactical obstacles and issues
3. Strategic - Discuss, analyze, brainstorm and decide upon critical issues affecting long-term success
4. Developmental - Review strategy, competitive landscape, industry trends, key personnel, team development

Making meetings more interesting

Five Tips for Better Meetings

1. Know the purpose of your meeting
2. Clarify what is at stake
3. Hook them from the outset
4. Set aside enough time
5. Provoke conflict

What is one take-away for you?

Conflict in leadership meetings

- Is it biblically acceptable to vigorously debate in Christian leadership meetings?
- Is it culturally appropriate?
- Does it help us make better decisions?
- What are some ground rules we need to prevent conflict from becoming personal?
- How can we provoke conflicts in productive ways?

How do we make decisions?

What are the options for how we can reach a decision?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Consensus

Different definitions of consensus

- Unanimity – complete agreement by everyone
- Consent by everyone to an acceptable solution
- Quakers – Emphasis on listening to one another and the Holy Spirit. Multiple concerns are shared until the sense of the group is clear. The facilitator articulates the sense of the discussion, asks if there are other concerns, and proposes a formulation of the decision

[Lencioni](#): I think that consensus on its own is a largely dangerous concept. I don't think that it's usually a good thing. When it comes about naturally that's wonderful, but generally, consensus is a way of ensuring mediocrity. You need conflict, an airing of opinions so that the leader of the organization can make a decision having factored in all of the various ideas and opinions of all the constituencies. But the leader should not try to make a decision that pleases everyone. Consensus is trying to develop a decision that's equally palatable to everyone or, often, equally unpalatable. Consensus fails to meet anyone's desires, but it does so equally, and so it's accepted. And that's how we get mediocrity.

- Is consensus the only biblical option for leadership decisions?
- Is it culturally imperative within SEND?
- When might it be inappropriate to wait for consensus?

Developing an agenda

1. Create an agenda idea file
2. Start preparing well in advance
3. Poll members for agenda items
4. Fuel the agenda from various perspectives:
 - a. Review the past
 - b. Assess the present
 - c. Look into the future
5. Include in the agenda a time to:
 - a. Recognize our dependence on God
 - b. Reconnect with one another
 - c. Remind ourselves of the vision
6. Determine what your desired outcome is for each agenda item
7. Talk to people individually about sensitive / critical issues

Leading the Meeting

How can you serve as a discussion facilitator when you have a clear opinion on the matter?

How do you determine whether the group is ready to make a decision?

When is it necessary to keep minutes?

Tips for leading virtual meetings

1. Spend more time on relationship building at the beginning
2. Ask each person by name to give input on each question
3. Use the fact that everyone is looking at a computer screen to your advantage
4. Ask someone else to host the conference call
- 5.

How to make sure that meetings result in actions

1. Determine when exploration/ discussion is adequate and when it is now time to make a decision.
2. Clearly assign responsibility and a time frame for each action point
3. Remind people of assignments
4. End the meeting with a note of achievement by reviewing key actions

After the meeting

1. Communicate decisions and actions
2. Record assignments
3. Your to-do list and calendar
4. List of team assignments
5. Note agenda items for next time
6. Review and distribute minutes

Your action plan as a result of this session

What do you plan to do differently as a result of what we have discussed?

Begin developing your agenda for your next leadership team meeting.