## Rules for a successful meeting

Below you can find some useful tips and phrases that can help you arrange and run a successful meeting and also deal with problems that can occur there.

**Collocations:**

* **Organize, arrange, set up, fix**
* **Put back, postpone**
* **Cancel**
* **Run, chair**
* **Attend**
* **Miss**

**a meeting**

**Types of meeting:** chat, brainstorming, project/team meeting, department/board meeting, meeting with suppliers/customers, annual meeting

**Golden rules of meetings:**

* Be clear about the purpose of the meeting.
* Invite the right people.
* Start and finish on time.
* Be prepared.
* Don’t get side-tracked.
* Don’t hold unnecessary meetings.
* Finish meetings with a clear statement of the next steps and who will take them.

**Opening the meeting:**

It’s about time we got started.

Let’s begin, shall we?

Shall we make a start?

Let’s make a start.

Let’s get down to business.

I’ve arranged this meeting to…

The purpose of this meeting is to…

The main objective is to…

**Making your point:**

I believe …

As I see it, …

In my opinion…

The way I see it…

It’s clear to me that…

Personally, I think …

It looks to me as if…

**Agreeing:**

You’re perfectly right.

I couldn’t agree more.

Precisely/Exactly/Absolutely.

You may be right there.

That’s true, I suppose.

I suppose so.

**Disagreeing:**

That’s not really how I see it.

I don’t really agree.

I can’t really go along with you there.

I think you’re mistaken.

I’m afraid I can’t agree with you there.

I’m sorry, but that’s out of the question.

I think you’re wrong.

Of course not.

**Asking for opinion:**

What’s your feeling?

Would you agree?

Do you have any views on…?

**Giving an opinion:**

I tend to think that…

In my opinion…

It seems to me that …

I feel strongly that …

**Disagreeing tactfully:**

I see your point, but …

I agree up to a point, but …

I’m afraid I can’t agree.

**Interrupting:**

Sorry to interrupt, but…

Could I just come in here?

If I can just stop you for a moment…

**Asking for clarification:**

Sorry, I don’t see what you mean.

So, are you saying that…?

Are you suggesting that…?

Are you implying that…?

When you say…, do you mean…?

If I understand correctly…

If I follow you…

**Persuading:**

Don’t you think that …?

Wouldn’t you agree that…?

**Managing the discussion:**

Do we all agree on that, then?

The next point on the agenda is…

Can we stick to the agenda?

Perhaps we should break for coffee.

Could we come back to this late?

### Diplomatic advice (what you want to say=how you should express yourself)

1. You shouldn’t disturb your co-workers. = Wouldn’t it be better not to disturb your co-workers?
2. You won’t meet deadlines if you don’t prioritize. = It seems to me that you need to prioritize if you want to meet deadlines.
3. Delegate, or you’ll never finish the job. = You might want to delegate more if you want to finish the job.
4. You shouldn’t eat at your desk. = I think perhaps you shouldn’t eat at your desk.
5. Don’t make personal calls at work. = You’d do better not to make personal calls at work.
6. If you ignore your colleagues, don’t expect them to help. = Actually, I think if you ignore your colleagues, you can’t expect them to help.
7. You’ll make yourself ill if you don’t take care of your life-work balance. = Wouldn’t you agree that you should take care of your life-work balance if you don’t want to get ill?

### Linking words to express yourself clearly and fluently

Addition: besides, moreover, in addition, furthermore

Conclusion: lastly, in conclusion, finally

Consequence: so, therefore, consequently

Contrast: but, however, even so

Equivalence: that is to say, namely, in other words

Example: for instance, such as, for example

Generalization: in most cases, as a rule, on the whole

Highlighting: mainly, chiefly, in particular, especially

Stating the obvious: of course, naturally, obviously, clearly

Summary: in summary, overall, in brief, to summarize

### Useful phrases

I’m trying to arrange a meeting for next week/next month.

Can you make Monday afternoon?

Could we make it Friday instead?

I could make it at 3 p.m.

I can’t make the meeting.

Any day next week except Monday would suit me.

I’m free every day next week except Monday.

I’m just calling to remind you about next week’s meeting.

I’ll call you tomorrow so we can discuss details then.

I don’t think we need more than an hour.

Who would like to take the minutes?

Can we go through the minutes?

Here are the main points…

I’m afraid I have some bad news.

I’m happy to say I have some good news.

We need to vote on it.

Is that really necessary?

Are you really sure?

I’d like to leave item five until the next meeting.

Can we look at item two?

Let’s move on to item two on the agenda.

What are your thoughts on this?

I’d like to make a point.

The other point I want to make is …

Just one other point…

I’d like to make one final point.

Does everyone agree?

Are we all in agreement?

Do you have the same opinion?

Does anyone disagree?

Unfortunately, they rejected nearly all of our proposals.

Only one of our proposals was accepted.

On second thoughts, I’d like to accept the proposal.

No decision was made.

We really must avoid this in the future.

It’s vital that we avoid this in the future.

It’s essential that we make changes.

It’s crucial that people should read this message.

Most people are in favour of the change.

The majority opinion is in favour.

Not many people agree with the idea.

The minority opinion is against it.

That’s not true.

I’m sorry, but I don’t agree.

I don’t think that’s true.

I’m not sure that’s true.

Is that really true?

Here are the main points covered during the meeting.

I’ve attached the draft minutes of the meeting.

Please check if I have left anything out.

Let me know if I have forgotten anything.

Check if I have made any mistakes.

### Example minutes

**Minutes of the Management Committee meeting, 22 January**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Follow-up action**  | **Person** | **Date** |
| Next meeting | All | 30 January, 5pm. |
| Get quotations for alarm systems/upgrades from three suppliers. | J-J.C. | 30 January |
| Implement new maintenance schedule. | I.C. | ASAP |
| Invite applications for part-time work. | A.F. | 30 January |
| Draw up budget for group football competition . | C.T. | 6 February |

**Present**

Jan Navratil, MD (Chair)

Ines Caba, Production

Christopher Taberley, Sales & Marketing

Alison Foster, HR

Jean-Jacques Chavent, Finance

Apologies for absence were received from Harry Finnegan, IT

**Agenda**

1 Alarm system – for discussion

2 Maintenance schedule – for decision

3 Diversity; measures to avoid risk of
discrimination – for discussion

4 AOB

**Alarm system**

I.C. reminded those present that the old alarm system was no longer adequate. It was agreed that the system should be upgraded or replaced: J-J.C. agreed to get quotes.

**Maintenance schedule**

J-J.C. enquired why the new maintenance schedule decided in September had not been implemented. A.F. explained that there had been some resistance from the unions; it was felt that full consultations were necessary before making changes. I.C. stressed that regular maintenance was essential to avoid the risk of breakdowns. It was decided that the new schedules should be introduced asap, in spite of the unions’ reservations.

**Diversity**

J.N. reported pressure from Head Office to reflect the increasing diversity in society by employing more women and ethnic minorities. A.F. and C.T. objected that positive discrimination would result in recruitment of less qualified staff. I.C. suggested part-time positions to allow more women with children to work. It was decided that applications for part-time work from new and existing staff should be encouraged.

**AOB**

C.T. suggested the company organize next year’s group football competition. J.N. asked C.T. to draw up a budget for discussion in two weeks.

**Provisional agenda for 30 January**

Alarm system – decision on upgrade or replacement

Marketing plan – presentation and discussion