



Extension FactSheet

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Following Up After the Meeting

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What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.

— T. S. Eliot

You planned and facilitated a productive meeting. Now what? As the saying goes, “No job is finished until the paperwork is done.” And that’s where you are now. Following a successful meeting you should have assignments, open items, a parking lot of potential agenda items, and notes. All of these items are the product of your work and must be captured in such a way that the product is useful. The final step in Making Meetings Manageable is to organize all this information in such a way that it not only ends the most recent meeting but also becomes the foundation for beginning the next meeting.

Four Steps to Take After a Meeting

Step 1. Minutes

Prepare and distribute the minutes of the meeting within 24 hours. Doing so serves several purposes:

1. The meeting product is captured while it is still fresh in the writer’s mind.

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2. Participants have an opportunity to review the work immediately.

3. Assignments are reiterated and the notation in the minutes serves as an accountability check for future reference.

4. The minutes get done!

Step 2. Follow Up

After preparing the minutes, make note of items that require action, or raise questions. Contact the appropriate people. Make certain people know their tasks, have necessary information, and get their questions answered.

As people read the minutes, receive support information, and begin work on their assignments, additional follow up may be required.

Step 3. Evaluation

As the meeting facilitator, take some time to reflect on the meeting itself. What went well? What could be improved? What would I do differently?

Periodically, ask participants to evaluate the meeting. Use their input for continuous improvement.



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Step 4. Agenda Development

“To make an end is to make a beginning.” Use the information gathered and developed through the process of writing the minutes, conducting follow up, and evaluating the meeting as the basis for the agenda of the next meeting. This provides continuity and keeps work focused on the goal.

Following these four simple steps can go a long way in concluding meetings, capturing information, completing tasks, and preparing for future meetings.

For Additional Information

For additional information, visit the Ohio State University Leadership Center’s site at:

<http://leadershipcenter.osu.edu>

References

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