

THREE WHAT'S

Managing Meetings



What

Many of us spend time in meetings. In every town and city in every country in the world a meeting is taking place or about to take place. Up to 56 million each day in the US alone. The research on the value of meetings is depressing. One senior observer described calling a meeting in the corporate world as an "abuse of power."

So What?

Badly led, time consuming, with no real agenda and no consequences - time lost to poorly constructed meetings whether face to face or virtual is time lost forever. There are common failings. Group problem solving can be less productive than individual brainstorming. The larger the group the more conformity. Larger groups produce a 'downward' pressure on innovation. Meetings lead to 'social loafing' where responsibility is diffused. No one speaks up or when they do it's for validation. There is good news – it can be fixed!

Now What?

To improve your meetings, start with the following questions. The first is – do you need the meeting? Are you sure? Why? If you must have the meeting, then...

Before

- Purpose – are you and the participants clear on the purpose of the meeting? Have you built the meeting agenda around your agreed purpose?
- Preparation – have you prepared beforehand by focusing on the outcomes and how you overcome the likely objections?
- People - do you know who is attending? How well do you know them? How does this meeting serve their interests? How do they benefit?

During

- Participation – during the meeting how do people contribute? Do the meeting protocols encourage purposeful contributions? Are you inclusive and invitational? Are you also keeping the focus?
- Progress – is there a sense of worth? Do you landmark progress by summarising, agreeing actions and linking to your agreed purpose?

After

- Permanence – as a result of the meeting what changes for the better? What do you and others do to sustain those beneficial changes?

Our ThreeWhats Managing Meetings Model is an inverted pyramid balanced by permanence. Permanence comes when the purposes of the meeting are fulfilled. Follow these 3-2-1 steps and read our Playbook to avoid an "abuse of power."