



Making the Most of Meetings

Have you ever figured the cost of your meetings? Multiply the total average salary of all participants by the number of hours spent in the meeting. Surprised?

In today's environment of increased productivity awareness, time spent in meetings must be optimized. Investment in the development of an effective meeting process will pay off in staff moral and productivity and will have a positive effect on the bottom line. Some practical suggestions:

- **Create meeting structure and order** – include start and end times, place, agenda and participant expectations. Send agenda ahead of meeting so staff will be prepared.
- **Be selective.** Before your next meeting, ask yourself who needs to be there. Is it worth everyone's time?
- **Establish goals for the meeting and re-direct when the discussion has lost focus.** Know what outcomes you want to achieve.
- **Foster involvement.** Ask open-ended questions of all members. If both management and hourly workers are included in the meeting, make sure that all levels are contributing.
- **Follow agenda and honor stated meeting timeframe.**
- **Move to action.** Summarize agreements and end meetings with clear assignments and time-line expectations.
- **Send meeting summary to all participants.**

Take action to make your staff meetings work for you. Effective meetings produce results including better outcomes for you and your organization, better decisions and increased motivation of those involved.