

The Keys to Running Effective Meetings  
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It's 9:10 a.m. and you are ready for "the meeting" to start, however the attendees are still assembling, discussing other issues, and dreading attending one more meeting. The meeting is finally ready to start at 9:16 a.m., the reason for the meeting is yet to be disclosed and the agenda is being distributed to the attendees. As the agenda makes it's way around the table, two more people join the meeting and ask for a copy of the agenda. Does any of this sound familiar? If so, read on to discover several keys to running more effective meetings:

1. Don't Call a Meeting Unless it's Necessary
  - Meetings can be avoided if the same information can be covered by sending an internal memo, an email, or a posting on the firm intranet.
2. Define the Objectives for a Meeting
  - Before a meeting is scheduled you should define the objectives of a meeting and then prepare an agenda to address the objectives
  - Determine who should attend the meeting and send out a meeting notice with enough time for attendees to adjust schedules.
3. Prepare and Provide an Agenda to All Attendees
  - Prepare the agenda and be sure to include a brief description of the meeting objectives and distribute prior to the meeting.
  - Provide a list of topics to be covered including who is responsible for covering each item.
  - Include specifics for the meeting including date, time, location, and time allotted for topics and the time allowed for the overall meeting.
  - Start and end the meeting on time.
4. Assign Action Steps
  - As the meeting progresses there will be key points that need action, ensure these are clearly addressed and assigned for follow up.
  - Ensure follow up action steps are clearly addressed with a specific timetable.
  - Action steps and results should be reported at the next scheduled meeting.

By following these simple steps you can improve the overall effectiveness of your meetings. Here are a few additional resources for planning effective meetings:

[www.meetingwizard.org](http://www.meetingwizard.org) - Meeting planning center with tips and advice

[www.toolpack.com](http://www.toolpack.com) – Tips on running more effective meetings

[www.managemnethelp.org/misc/mgtmgmnt](http://www.managemnethelp.org/misc/mgtmgmnt) - Basic guide to conducting effective meetings

[www.effectivemeeting.com](http://www.effectivemeeting.com) – Meeting productivity solutions with many resources