



MEETINGS



GOALS

1. Understand the concept of a meeting.
2. Gain knowledge about the components of meetings.
3. Learn to prepare agendas.
4. To be able to take down notes during meetings and draft minutes of a meeting.
5. To be able to compile an 'Action Taken Report'.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Determine aspects of a meeting.
- ◆ Explain requisites for conducting a meeting.
- ◆ Elucidate need for an agenda.
- ◆ Learn to take down notes during meeting.
- ◆ Explicate writing down minutes of meetings.
- ◆ Discuss and write 'Action Taken Report'.



INTRODUCTION

According to Business Dictionary a *meeting* is defined as, 'Formal or informal deliberative assembly of individuals called to debate certain issues and problems, and to take decisions.' Formal meetings are held at definite times, at a definite place, and usually for a definite duration to follow an agreed upon agenda. In a corporate setting, meetings are of two types.

- (1) **Organisational meeting:** A meeting that takes place at a definite time, usually with the same agenda and outcomes such as one that includes stockholders (shareholders) and management, as participants eg. a Board Meeting and Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- (2) **Operational meeting:** Regular or ad hoc meeting where time and agenda are not fixed in the sense it can be called anytime involving committee/section/department head and employees, such as a committee/section/department meeting

Meetings are a part and parcel of everyday life at work places in modern times. Meetings are conducted by people within an organisation to resolve problems and issues faced while planning a task, to chalk out new strategies to promote business or increase profitability, to exchange ideas/information, to ensure coordination on issues and to announce/propagate a message effectively within a group/organisation. For any meeting to be successful, coordination and cooperation amongst the team/group members is essential. There must be a common intention of achieving some goal or objective.

The Requisites for a Meeting are:

1. **Select the Right Participants:** The participants in the meeting have to be chosen with extreme care. Often people are included because they belong to the department or are part of the team, or because you do not wish to offend anyone. To engage in a purposeful meeting, participants must have a reason for attending; a point of view about the issue, the need to know, the authority to make a decision, or share any useful information, that will add value to the discussion and lead to some conclusion.
2. **Set an Agenda:** An agenda must be formalised before the meeting. Agendas are the objectives/purpose and framework that define the points of discussion. Agenda communicates the purpose of the meeting, lists the speakers/ participants and states the time allotted to each speaker and so forth.
3. **Send Intimation to all participants:** Notice/Circular for the meeting should be sent by a competent authority at least 2-3 days prior to the meeting (unless it is called in an emergency situation) so that participants have the time to prepare, gather information and data required for it. It must have information about date, time, venue, names of participants and the agenda of the meeting.
4. **Appoint a Facilitator:** A facilitator is appointed to guide the meeting to its logical conclusion. His/her task is to aid the group in reaching a consensus while taking a decision. He ensures (i) the participants stick to the agenda (ii) provides a structure to the process, (iii) enables cooperative decision-making (iv) ensures conflict avoidance/resolution.
5. **Arrive at Clear Conclusions and Formulate Next Steps:** Many a times meetings fail to come to clear conclusions about the agenda/points under consideration. Irrespective of the result of the meeting, members of the group are accountable and committed to the resolution taken by them. After deliberation on an agenda topic, it is necessary to summarise what was discussed; state lucidly the deductions arrived at, and decide on further steps to be taken. After the meeting concludes, a brief account of the proceedings is prepared known as **Minutes of the Meeting** to summarise the conclusions and future course of action.
6. **Create Opportunities For Creativity and Participation:** In most meetings the structure is top-centric, that is, the senior management speaks and the juniors only contribute when asked to give their inputs. When there is lack of free flow of ideas, information and opportunities to speak, the participants fail to

contribute their perspective, curbing their creativity. In such a scenario the purpose of the meeting is defeated. A meeting should be an opportunity to bring multiple perspectives into the room in order to collaborate, debate, decide, and perform the tasks assigned to the team.

Need for an Agenda:

Agendas are the blueprints for successful meetings. They are essential as they:

- a. State the objective/purpose of the meeting.
- b. Enumerate the issues/ topics to be discussed.
- c. Keep the meeting focused on the issues prevents the speakers to deviate from the subjects and issues stated in the agenda.
- d. To guide the participants to understand and prepare for their roles.
- e. Allot specific time to each speaker.
- f. Inform the sequence in which the members will speak.

An example of tabular agenda-

Time	Topic	Attendees	Speaker	Duration
9:00 am	Introduction	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	15 minutes
9:15 am	Discussing upcoming strategy for launch of new product	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	30 minutes
9:45 am	Project Report	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	30 minutes
10:15 am	Tea break	All members		20 minutes
10:35 am	Market trends	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	25 minutes
11:00 am	Details on costing	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	30 minutes
11:30 am	Open house	Questions and discussions from participants		20 minutes
11:50 am	Thank you note	All members	Chairperson	10 minutes

Template for Meeting Agenda:

MEETING INFORMATION

Objective :

Date: 01/01/2000

Time: 6:00 AM

Location: [Enter Location]

AGENDA ITEMS	PRESENTER
1. Call to Order	[Name]
2. Pledge of Allegiance	[Name]
3. Welcome/Introduction	[Name]
4. Roll Call	[Name]
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	[Name]
6. Old Business	[Name]
A. [Tem 1]	[Name]
7. New Business	[Name]
A [Tem 1]	
B [Tem 2]	
8. Additions to Agenda	[Name]
9. Calendar	
10. Adjournment	
OTHER NOTES OR INFORMATION	

Recorded By :

Date :

Meeting Agenda Template @2010Vertex42.com**Source: Vertex42.com****MINUTES OF A MEETING**

Minutes, or, informally notes, are the instant written record of a meeting . These typically describe the events of the meeting and may include a list of attendees or participants, a statement of the issues considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions for the issues

Need for preparing Minutes of a Meeting

- a. Various participants may have different recollections of the meeting.
- b. Diverse interpretations of action plan are possible.
- c. Important tasks can be forgotten.
- d. Dates of submission of subject matter/ report/ action taken plan might be overlooked.
- e. A written record is always available for future reference
- f. Used as reminders for oneself and others.
- g. Can be required for legal reasons.

Steps in writing the Minutes:

Points to be kept in mind while writing minutes of meeting:

1. Pre-Planning- It is essential in taking clear and complete notes of the meeting.
 - Use a copy of the agenda as a guideline to take notes and prepare the minutes
 - Use a similar order and numbering of items as on the agenda for the meeting.
 - Note down the names of all people attending the meeting in advance.
 - All documents and handouts used or given in the meeting should be filed for future reference and shared with others.
 - Get clear instructions of the expectations of your role during the meeting, as well as the details expected in the minutes.
2. Record taking at the meeting-Understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting. Though several organisations have their own structures in place, there are certain points common to all:
 - The date and time of meeting
 - Names of all participants present and absent in the meeting.
 - The actions taken as decided in the previous meeting.
 - The decisions taken (if any) about each agenda item.
 - The necessary steps taken or will be taken with reference to each issue.
 - The future plan of action.
 - Date and time of next meeting, if decided.

Suggestions for Taking Notes:

- a. Have a format/ structure ready. Note down main points to be discussed in the agenda so that you can simply jot down the all details of discussions, decisions etc. under each main/ sub point. Leave enough space below each item for your hand-written notes to be printed later.

- b. Keep a record of attendees; ensure that the names of all people attending the meeting are noted.
- c. Mention all absentees at the meeting.
- d. Make notes on all items for discussion on agenda during the meeting to ensure accuracy.
- e. Ask for clarification if there is ambiguity at any point.
- f. Do not try to capture it all as it is impossible to take down the complete proceedings of the meeting. Therefore, write (or type) just the decisions, assignments, actionable points, etc. briefly, clearly and sequentially.
- g. Record it –you can also record the meeting (e.g., on your smart phone, iPad, recording device, etc.). However, all participants must know they are being recorded. The recording is useful if you need clarifications.

3. **The Minutes Writing Process-**

After the meeting is over; you have to write the minutes.

- Go through the recording. You may decide to add some details and delete some in the written report.
- Recheck with all concerned to ensure that all decisions, resolutions and motions are correctly noted.
- Ensure that all required details are noted, especially if the meetings are lengthy and long drawn deliberations have taken place.
- Notes should be brief and easy to understand.
- Ensure proper sequence, flow and grammatical accuracy.
- Do not include any personal conflicts or comments.
- Reference material if any, can be attached in the appendix.

4. **Distributing or Sharing Meeting Minutes-**

Before circulating the minutes of the meeting, get the draft duly approved by a competent authority heading the meeting. You can either send hard copies or share it (if the authorities permit it) on email.

5. **Filing/Storage of Meeting Minutes-**

After the final approval, the minutes need to be filed for future reference. The minutes can also be stored online, in hard drives.

Example of minutes of meeting:

Minutes

Date: 5th Dec, 20xx

Meetings started at 9: 00 am.

Participants present: Mr. Ramesh, Mr. Kamlesh, Ms. Shalini, Mr. Rehman, Mr. Satyan, Mr, X, Mr. Y, Mr. Z

Mr. Ramesh, Chairperson gave an introduction

Mr. Kamlesh, Product Head spoke about the new product

Ms. Shalini, Regional Manager, Business, presented a detailed project report including market surveys, future projections and challenges.

Participants approved and appreciated Ms. Shalini's report.

Mr. Rehman, Marketing Head discussed the current market scenario, demand & supply and customer interest.

Mr. Satyan, Director Finance, gave details of costing. Finance team led by Mr X, Mr. Y and Mr. Z were part of the presentation.

The Chairperson declared an open house for participants to put up their concerns, and finally gave a vote of thanks.

Conclusions stated

Proposal for more funds put forward.

Tenders to be released

ATR to be submitted by 12th Dec, 20 xx

Action Taken Report (ATR)

Action Taken Report is a report compiled few days after a meeting, stating the various actions taken as per the discussions made.

ATR must always be submitted after a gap of about 5-7 days, or more, after the meetings. This gives appropriate time for actions to be taken and the matter to be discussed/ stated in the form of a report.

Read the following sample ATR for a better understanding:

Action Taken Report

12th Dec, 20xx

As per the meeting held on 5th Dec, 20xx at the Head Office of SV Technologies, following actions have been reported:

- ◆ The client had complied to deliver the goods by 4th Dec. Work done.
- ◆ The client has asked for more time for installation of 600KV turbine.
- ◆ The order has been retained and client's proposal has been agreed to.

Undersigned

Director, Sales & Marketing

Director, Business



PRACTICE EXERCISES

1. The Managing Committee of Bharat Shiksha Institute has decided to bring changes in the English and Accountancy syllabus for the first year course. Mr. Kamal Kapoor, the Academic Dean of the institute, has been assigned the task of convening a meeting of all stakeholders- subject experts, college lecturers, students and members of print and publishing department,- to decide the necessary alterations in the syllabi. As Kamal Kapoor –

Set an agenda for the meeting. (Suggestions for discussions-Review previous syllabus, identify redundant topics, suggest inclusion of latest relevant content, include constructive and useful content from student point of view, discuss time frame for completion of revamping)
 - a. Inform your secretary, Ms. Swati Singh, to write the minutes of the meeting.
 - b. Submit an 'Action Taken Report' to the managing committee.

(Each section should be written in about 200 words)
2. The Marketing Head of Aptex Products, a consumer goods company, plans to conduct a meeting to review the effectiveness of marketing policies of the previous year and plan strategies for the next year to increase the profit margin of the company. (attendees should be from marketing, advertising and media, and research and development department)
 - a. Set an agenda for the meeting(suggestions for discussion- products that garnered high sales and those that failed to make the mark; reasons for poor sales; new research and development input, novel advertising means)
 - b. Designate your secretary to write the minutes of the meeting.
 - c. Ask the junior marketing analyst, Mr. Sudeep Roy, to submit an 'Action Taken Report' to him within seven days.

(Each section should be written in about 200 words)
3. As the Chief of staff to the Director, Finance, prepare a tabular form agenda of an upcoming meeting. The agenda is to discuss a new merger with a foreign client. Your company is into the telecom sector.
4. Prepare the Minutes of a Meeting, presided by the Chairman of HKU Pvt Ltd, an FMCG company. The main agenda of the meeting was introducing a new product, fixing a cost, discussing the Sales and Marketing and the advertising strategies.
5. Set an agenda for an organisation meeting to discuss the effect of Covid 19 on the current sales. (Include speakers from sales and marketing, Finance and HR: discuss the effects, the challenges, the future action plan etc.).
6. Prepare Minutes of the Meeting for Question 5.
7. Prepare an Agenda for an internal meeting of a Pharmaceutical Company. The meeting would primarily discuss the heavy sale of Paracetamol drug and the inability to cope with the extensive demand as opposed to a limited supply. (Include speakers from the drug and delivery department, subject experts and Sales and Marketing experts)


ANSWERS

Clues for 1 and 2

Agenda-(follow the pattern given in template)

Minutes of Meeting-- follow all points mentioned in 'record the minutes'

Action Taken Report-mention in brief how much work completed by the various members.

3.

Time	Topic	Attendees	Speaker	Duration
8:30 am	Introduction	Name of the participants	Director, Finance	10 minutes
8:40 am	Discussing merger plans	Name of the participants	Finance team members	25 mins.
9:05 am	Tea /breakfast break	Tea break	Tea/breakfast break	30 mins
9:35 am	Discussion on growing telecom sector	Name of the participants	Name the speakers	15 mins
9:50 am	Technology upgrade discussion	Name of the participants	Name the speaker	20 mins
10: 10 am	Open House	All participants	All members	10 mins
10:20 am	Vote of Thanks	All participants	Chairperson	5 mins.

4. **Minutes of Meeting**

Speakers involved were: the chairperson, the Product Head, the Sales Head and the Creative Director. FMCG, new product new product, fixing a cost, discussing the Sales and Marketing and the advertising strategies.

Date: xx/xx/xxxx

Meeting started at 4: 00pm.

In Attendance: Chairperson, Product Head, Sales Head and Creative Director.FMCG.

Agenda: Discussion on Sales ,Marketing and the advertising strategies.

Minutes

Mrs Kamla Murthy, Chairperson, gave an introduction about the product range and the need to add more to retain the market share.

Mr. Raju D, Product Head spoke about the new product its USPs and explained how it was superior to others in the segment available in the market.

Mrs. Usha Krishnan, Sales Head gave a detailed analysis of costing, overheads and other miscellaneous expenses to market the product.

Ms. Jennie Matthew, Creative director, PR, spoke about advertising campaign. Also mentioned the cost involved.

Her team including Mr. X, Mr. Y, Mr. Z elaborated on the advertising strategies.

All the participants approved of the plan and appreciated it.

Madam Chairperson declared an open house for participants to put up their concerns, and finally gave a vote of thanks.

Conclusions stated. Proposal for more funds put forward.

ATR to be submitted by xx/xx/xxxx

5. Table as follow for Agenda

Time	Topic	Attendees	Speaker	Duration
4:00 pm	Introduction	All participants	Mr. Keshav (Finance)	10 mins
4:10 pm	Quarterly Results	All participants	Mr. Amit (Finance)	40 mins
4:50 pm	Impact of Covid 19 on sales	All participants	Ms. Ramya (Sales)	30 mins
5:20 pm	Future challenges	All participants	Mr. Arun (Product)	30 mins
5:50 pm	Impact on Turnover	All participants	Mr. Raj (Sales and Marketing)	20 mins
6:10 pm	Solutions and Recommendations	All participants	Ms. Ramya & Mr. Arun	30 mins
6:40 pm	Break	Break	Break	Break
7:00 pm	New HR policies	All senior officials	Ms. Garima (HR)	30 mins
7:30 pm	Thank you note	All senior officials	Ms. Garima (HR)	10 mins

6. Minutes

Date: 22nd Sept, 2020

Meeting started at 4:00 pm

Mr. Keshav from the Finance department gave a short introduction.

Mr. Amit, also from finance discussed at length the quarterly results. (Slides shown)

Ms. Ramya gave a brief on the impact of Covid 19 on the current sales followed by Mr. Arun who spoke about the challenges in store.

Mr. Raj from the S & M team, discussed the impact of the sales on the turnover.

Ms. Ramya and Mr. Arun, together offered solutions and suggested recommendations for the issue in concern.

A short break was announced, wherein many participants could exit the meeting.

Only senior officials were present for the post break session.

Ms. Garima discussed the new HR policies and also ended the meeting with a vote of thanks.

ATR will be submitted by 28th September, 20XX

7. Make an agenda in a tabular format. Refer to answer 3.

Topics for discussion can be as follows:

Sales and Marketing person: Limited sales due to limited workforce/ Difficult to increase production

Drug experts: Over supply of paracetamol and over usage might have side effects/ the clients/customers should be aware

Subject experts: Paracetamol is not the solution/vaccine for Covid 19

Production department: Need more time/ Quality cannot be compromised

NOTE: All the above are hints/prompts for the questions. Students are free to make changes in the content; stick to the format though.