

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Facilitating Meetings."

ROLES IN A TEAM

Most people come to a meeting expecting to be led. Their preparation is minimal and they participate only when the topic suits their area of interest. They may complain about the wasted time spent in meaningless meetings without realizing they are part of the problem.



Successful meetings have more roles than just participant and leader. Let's take a look at some roles and the responsibilities with those roles.

Leader: This is the person who plans the meetings by establishing the purpose and agenda. The leader usually directs the meeting by calling upon participants, asking for conclusions, and reporting results. Skills required include: organization, people watching, listening, restraint from expressing opinions, delegation, and negotiation.

Participants: These are the people who contribute to the agenda, prepare before the actual meeting, and participate equally among each other. Skills required include: organization, listening, assessing, and responsible action.

Scribe: This individual keeps the notes from the meeting. The scribe can be someone who does not participate in the discussions. If everyone wants to openly discuss, participants can take turns being the scribe so that the workload is shared. Skills required include good listening and legible writing.

Timekeeper: This individual is responsible for keeping the group aware of the time spent on each topic and to ensure that the meeting ends on time. Skills required include focused attention and ability to speak up and inform the group of the time.

Facilitator: This individual helps the leader to plan the meeting and works with the leader during the meeting to ensure that the process is being followed. It is usually easier for the facilitator not to be a participant in the discussion. Skills required include: organization, ability to control groups of people, ability to be seen more than heard, and ability to speak up when needed.

IN THE NEWS

Our CEO Sent to Ireland for Peace Initiative



Beverly Inman-Ebel went as a member of The State Department Task Force to work on the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland Peace Initiative. She spent a week in both countries meeting with government officials, community leaders, university heads, and women business owners. The goal was to help establish trade between the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States. Beverly worked to connect women business owners together and to establish trade between U.S. companies and businesses in Ireland. While the trip is completed, the business of doing business is just beginning.

What Our Clients Are Saying

I thought [Beverly] was great and very inspirational. She gave me a lot of food for thought as far as communication goes. I purchased her book and have already told folks at work how great her talk was. If I ever get the opportunity to hear her speak again, I will. Having Beverly as the opening speaker was a great way to start the symposium.

Gail H. Ramsey, Aiken SC



OCTOBER 2004

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LOOKING AHEAD:

- ♦ The November issue of the Exchange focuses on Resolving Conflict.

LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the [September 2002](#) edition: Meetings.

If you want to build a ship, then don't drum up men to gather wood, give orders, and divide the work. Rather, teach them to yearn for the far and endless sea.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery



Helpful Hints:

- **State the purpose of the meeting up front (for example: brainstorming, decision-making, status check, update/information, strategic planning, etc.)**
- **Use questions beginning with "How" or "What" to get quiet participants to contribute.**
- **Set ground rules up front to establish what the parameters of the meeting will be.**

When the result of a meeting is to schedule more meetings, it usually signals trouble.

Kevin J. Murphy



To learn more about it, click here!

MEETING GUIDELINES

Groups that are going to meet regularly or for an extended period of time can increase their productivity and lessen their frustration by deciding beforehand the rules under which they will operate. To accomplish this, the first item on the agenda is to brainstorm on the guidelines.

Using a flipchart and a scribe, ask the participants what guidelines they want included. Go around the room and allow each participant to name one. If the group is relatively small, each participant can contribute multiple times. For large groups, below is a suggested list of guidelines that can be given to a group who can then be asked to accept or alter the list.

- The meeting will start on time.
- Electronic devices (phones, blackberries, computers, pagers, etc.) will be turned off or in silent mode.
- Cross talk or side conversations will not occur.
- Key discussions will be time boxed. (A predetermined time will be set for a particular discussion.)
- Participants will not interrupt each other.
- Participants will remain focused on whomever is speaking.
- Participants will come prepared.
- Decisions will be made via vote or consensus (choose one).
- The meeting will end on time.

HOW INTERCONNECTED ARE YOU?

Corporations like IBM and Disney have retained internationally known philosopher and futurist Leland Kaiser, Ph.D., to help them understand what the future can hold for them. Dr. Kaiser says that companies and communities can consciously create incredibly efficient outcomes by focusing on interconnectivity. Interconnectivity is a state of highly efficient communication and coordination. Kaiser teaches that the most efficient systems of the future will coordinate actions and share resources (including information). Organizations, whether they are corporations or communities, can design their own future with effective communication as the key.

The most successful leaders, managers, and employees will be the most competent communicators. Competent communicators

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"GET SMART"

Don Adams played Agent Maxwell Smart in the 1960's sitcom "Get Smart." One of the problems that Agent Smart had was that he frequently misunderstood important warnings and instructions because he didn't listen very well. The usual result was that in each week's episode, he was the victim of a bizarre and potentially fatal plot hatched by "Kaos" (the gang who couldn't spell straight). How many times have you been victim to the real chaos that came from your own poor listening?

The one thing that Agent Smart routinely missed was the opportunity to clarify what other people really meant when they spoke to him. A ParaProbe® is the tool that would have saved him a lot of trouble. A ParaProbe® is simply a restatement in your own words of what you heard. There can also be a yes/no tag question to prompt the speaker/listener to confirm or correct the message.

The most common use of ParaProbes® is with specific information such as phone numbers ("That's area code 423, 622-8255, right, Agent 99?"). The power of this tool is expanded when used in communication exchanges to check for the understanding of more complex messages. "So, boss, you said that Kaos is planning to smother the entire U.N. Building in whipped cream this afternoon?" "No, Max, Kaos is going to smother both you and Agent 99 with whipped cream!"

Maxwell Smart didn't ever learn to listen very effectively. While you can't change the way that other people listen, you sure can change the way that you listen! So, "Get Smart" with your communication and avoid "Kaos" – call TLC today!



DO YOU REALLY NEED A MEETING?

Answer the following questions to determine if you should really have that meeting!

- What needs to be accomplished?
- Can one person handle it efficiently?
- If more than one person's input, feedback, approval, or participation is needed, can the process be completed by email, conference call, or by circulating a memo and/or comment sheet?
- What are the alternatives for getting the task done other than having a meeting?
- Is having a meeting the best way to proceed?

ABOVE BOARD

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

When meetings were facilitated centuries ago, the phrase, "above board", originated not by what was said in meetings, rather by what was observed. Perhaps in your meetings today, the participants sit so that each person in the room can see everyone else. Once you are seated at the table, you can only see them from the torso up. To see the person's lower body, you would have to look under the table.

When we say something we are uncomfortable with, even if it's the truth, our bodies create chemicals that generate energy that must be released. For some of us, we use our hands more, our skin can change colors, or we might sweat or even talk faster. All of these nonverbal signals are obvious indicators that can be seen easily even by the untrained eye. In other words, our truth can be observed "above the board" or table.

A few centuries ago in the Eastern part of the world, tables were thick, heavy, and made of either wood or stone. These tables were solid even to the ground. There was no looking under them. These large slabs did have an advantage in meetings. The best way to release that energy your body produces in emotional situations is to physically release it quickly. A quick body shift, or continuous shuffling of the legs and feet would do it. Of course these non-verbal movements are done below the board or table.

Considering that quick, lower body movements are signs of deception when these nuances are seen, people subconsciously doubt what is being said. If they see that you are poised and in control, even if only "above board", what you say is held in a higher regard.

In your next meeting that you either attend or facilitate, send the right message by controlling your body and looking and sounding in control.

INTERCONNECTED, Continued from page 3

know how to craft their communications in a variety of settings (interpersonal, small group, and public) using all available methods of communication (verbal, nonverbal, written, telephonic, and electronic). Competent communicators understand how individual behavioral styles, experiences, and perceptions determine how other people "decode" their communications.

The most successful organizations have adapted to changing technologies and marketplaces by investing in their human capital. Team-building and communication-skills training have become a fundamental part

of the organizational planning, strengthening, and restructuring. The more competitive the marketplace becomes, the more important communication and teamwork become. As Dr. Kaiser teaches, we can best achieve our goals when we are interconnected through effective communication. The bottom line is that successful interpersonal communication is one of the most significant building blocks of business, and it will be one of the key hallmarks of successful organizations in the future.

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

People are always late coming to my meetings. I have tried everything from begging to threatening. It's unfair to make punctual people wait, and then I get complaints that the meetings run over because the first few minutes are spent waiting or catching people up. I could give monetary rewards but I would feel silly paying someone to arrive at my meetings on time. I think that's what they are supposed to do. I am almost ready to just give in and accept that people will always be late. Can you help me?
Ticked Off Tock

Dear Ticked,

Latecomers to meetings are common problems. Here are some suggestions that have worked for our clients in the past. Take a look and implement the ones you feel will work best for your group.

- Use "odd sounding" meeting times, for example: 1:37 p.m. –2:58 p.m.
- Begin on time. Even if everyone is not there, eventually others will catch on.
- Do not take meeting time to catch up late arrivals, have them either stay afterwards or have them take the initiative to get the information themselves.
- Have an agreement that for each minute a person is late, he/she must donate a quarter (or other specified amount) to the "meeting fund." At the next meeting, that money goes toward refreshments for all those that were on time. Serve these at the beginning of the next meeting.

Ultimately, some people may never appreciate the value of being punctual. Unfortunately, they might not realize the negative impact that being late can have on their professional image.

The most that you can do as a good leader is to provide an environment where professionalism and punctuality are expected.



Remember to...

- **Set an agenda at least forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting.**
- **Follow the agenda. Vote to determine if items not mentioned on the agenda will be included.**
- **Send the minutes from the meeting within twenty-four hours after its conclusion.**

There's as much risk in doing nothing as in doing something.

Trammell Crow

If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, we did it. If anything goes really good, then you did it. That's all it takes to get people to win football games for you.

Paul William "Bear" Bryant



If you think communication is all talk, you haven't been listening.

Ashleigh Brilliant

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

Anais Nin

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CEO CORNER: "Making Things Easier"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

Whenever I write an article or prepare a speech, I have my trusted American Heritage Dictionary by my side. I use it not for spelling as much as for clear definitions of the words I choose. I define a facilitator as one who ensures that the group follows the process. My faithful dictionary defines facilitate: "to free from difficulties or obstacles; make easier; aid; assist."

I especially like the phrase, "make easier." In a meeting, we all need help with making things easier. Over the years, as I have guided many clients to successful meetings, I realize with a smile that indeed I helped them to have an easier time.

One lady was very detailed and felt that the percentages that she offered were vital for her team to understand. She complained that they took little notice of them, causing her to spend even more time laboring the message to unhearing ears. I suggested she go to a local cookie company and order a large round chocolate chip cookie with icing dividing the circle into percentages that fit her situation. She came back delighted with the results. She told me the team happily discussed what portion of the cookie they were eating and they had a purposeful discussion on the otherwise dry information.

Another time I facilitated a meeting of a board of directors who were upset about a change being proposed to them. The directors were told before they saw the plan that they should jot down any question during the presentation, and then all questions would be asked immediately following the presentation. That resulted in approximately thirty questions from sixteen people. Knowing they could ask, and requesting them to put the questions in writing, created a willingness to listen and well-thought-out questions. Everyone was pleased with the results.

A leader of one meeting complained to me that participants were using their blackberries or computers during the meeting. He felt it was not only a distraction for the offending participant, but that it detracted from group discussion. When I facilitated the next meeting, we began by determining the guidelines that the group wanted compliance upon. It turned out that the group decided that electronic devices would not be tolerated during the meetings. The leader was thrilled because now he was not the dictator, rather a member of the team.

What can you do at your next meeting to make it easier for your team? You can arrive on time and be prepared. If you are an extrovert, strive to measure how often you speak. Call upon other people who are quiet even when you are not the leader. Ask for a summarization of decisions that are made. Stay focused during the meeting, remembering that where your eyes wander, your mind will follow. Keep your commitments. Give feedback to the group so that as a team, you will get better. Prepare. Arrive. Participate. Live your dreams.

FEATURED SERVICE: Time Management Profile & Coaching

TLC has a time management profile that will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. It also gives practical tips to help you become more productive. This profile is only \$17.50.

We also provide time management coaching, focusing on the areas that need improvement. If your whole team could use a boost in this area, TLC has a one-day time management seminar followed by an individual coaching session to help each participant set and reach his/her goals. It is time to call TLC: 1-888-BECAUSE (232-2873).



TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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