HOW TO RUN AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

The purpose of most meetings is to discuss current problems and make decisions. It is important to use Decision Logs to record major decisions made and to assign Action Items (and recorn them) for tasks assigned during meetings. Meetings:

1. The "leader" has prepared an agenda for the meeting, and has distributed it to all members prior to the meeting with sufficient advanced notice.
2. The "leader" has invited the correct people to attend
3. All members must come prepared – having accomplished their pre-assigned tasks!
4. The agenda is followed closely – do not stray from the tasks at hand.
5. All members openly contribute to discussions.
6. Keep notes. Record all decisions! Write down the "whys" of the decisions.
7. Assign "action items" – lists of things each individual should accomplish and by when.
8. At the end of the meeting, review the action items, decisions made and plan the next meeting's time and agenda.
9. All members are responsible for making sure the above steps are accomplished! All members take on leadership roles.

(The following is from Sean Berg, ASME International, 2000.)

Attributes of a good meeting
    Start on time
    Leader brings everyone "up to date"
    Leader clearly communicates the purpose of the meeting
    Attendees contribute by listening and speaking
    Stay on track
        Follow the agenda
        Keep discussions based on the task at hand, do not stray.
    Everyone is free to speak their mind, raise concerns, make comments, etc.
    Close the meeting decisively with everyone knowing what they need to do.

Meeting Leadership's Role:

    Before each meeting, make an agenda for the meeting, distribute it in time to allow everyone to prepare.
    If you are unable to attend a meeting, appoint an alternate to run the meeting.
    Show up on time to all team meetings.
    Speak up and voice your opinions - but do not dominate! Your opinion has NO MORE WEIGHT than any other team member.
    Unite the participants (everyone feels safe and welcome)
        Remove aggressive attitudes
            Let off steam
            Do not take sides
            Stick to the facts

Do not allow criticism of ideas.

Make sure the atmosphere is not "hostile." Keep the atmosphere professional, avoid personal issues. Make sure ALL OPINIONS are voiced. Some individuals may hesitate to speak - make sure they are heard from.

Focus the group (so everyone knows what needs to be done)

Define and communicate the purpose of the meeting

Stay alert

Keep control of the meeting

Test comprehension of what is being said (ask/rephrase questions), make sure misunderstandings are not occurring.

If the agenda gets sidetracked - gently bring the discussion back to the matters at hand. Use the printed agenda to remind members what needs to be discussed. All comments made during meetings should be relevant to project progress.

Get the group moving

Record suggestions and decisions

Build up ideas

Assign specific tasks and due dates (action items)

Review

All decisions made during the meeting

Review assigned action items

Define time for next meeting and its agenda

"Non-Leaders" Role

"Non-leaders" must take on leadership roles, all attendees are responsible for making sure the meeting is productive.

Show up on time to all team meetings.

If you are unable to attend a meeting, notify your leader as soon as possible.

Come to the meeting prepared - read the agenda, address items that are your responsibility.

Speak up and voice your opinions - this is YOUR team.

All comments made during meetings should be relevant to project progress. Do not get "side tracked" on unrelated topics.

Do not criticize teammate ideas.

Keep the atmosphere professional and avoid personal issues.

Outside of meetings

Conduct all tasks as determined by you and the team to the best of your ability.

Make sure your team is aware of any problems you encounter - do not hide "bad news".

COMMUNICATE with your team, and with me!