



Puttin' on the Dance Session Notes

“Leading Effective Meetings”

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Handouts:

- Meeting Skills For Team Leaders
- Set of minutes from Monadnock Folklore Society Board Meeting

One-word descriptions for meetings (from participants): synchronicity, fun, productive, useful, possibilities, cooperation, too long, frustrating, hopeful, diffuse, necessary.

Session Objectives:

- Show value of planning for meeting
- Share tools for development of good agendas
- Demonstrate good practice

Bad meetings:

- No agenda
- No outcome
- Become gripe sessions
- Unresolved differences
- Polarization
- Loss of focus
- Non-inclusion and disregarding

Why meet?

- Communication, and improving communication
- Share information, get input
- Problem-solving
- Make plans
- Divide responsibilities
- Group cohesion

- Share/find common vision
- Rejuvenate
- Assist in accountability
- Build community
- Build capacity
- Make decisions

Meetings need to meet both business needs and social needs.

Agendas

- A “vision” for a meeting
- Important to take the time to create a great one

Example of a bad agenda:

1. Volunteers
2. Next Year
3. The Board

Problems:

- No clear expectations
- Different people have different ideas of what’s meant
- Loss of focus -- lose time in understanding what is to be done
- Topics too large; people get exhausted before getting to the last one

Result: BOGGSAT – Bunch Of Guys and Gals Sitting Around Talking. Nothing gets done.

Break the big goals into small steps that can be tackled in the meeting to actually get work accomplished.

Working on a given agenda item

Components:

- Clarify desired outcome for each item
- Designate a process for each outcome

Process Toolkit -- Formats:

- Open discussion (BOGGSAT) -- has a place
- Presentations and reports

[Extroverts are comfortable doing these two, but these risk losing the voices of the introverts who might have better ideas. Different formats allow hearing from everyone.]

- Individual Writing
 - Chance to get settled and start thinking about the meeting
 - Chance to think before hearing others
 - Set goals
 - Pre-brainstorming sensitive/challenging issues
 - Can create focus
- Idea Listing – leader writes ideas from participants on flip chart/white board – can be popcorn
- Structured Go-Around
 - Everyone has opportunity – get additional valuable voices heard
 - Can easily retrieve ideas and carry them forward/build on them
 - Things don't get forgotten
 - Ask specific questions that need answering
 - Brainstorming
- Groups of Three
 - More personal, intimate – bonding opportunity
 - More opportunity per person to present ideas -- generate more ideas at once (from the whole room)
 - More ability to focus, get more in depth, not get distracted/sidetracked
 - Easier to disagree – not as public
 - See if there is common agreement about topics brainstormed in large group
 - Requires people to engage and not tune out
 - Allows people to hear better
 - Need to report back to large group
- Role Playing
 - Hard – introverts don't like it
 - Useful in figuring out how to deal with difficult dancers in a caring way

- Other Tools (not as relevant for this setting)
 - Fishbowl – small group in center doing work, everyone else observing
 - Trade Show – each small group has poster, everyone walks around and looks at them
 - Gallery Tour – everyone takes turns presenting poster to a group, group goes from poster to poster

Agenda Item Example: Volunteers

- What can we accomplish in ONE meeting?
- State desired outcome on agenda: come up with list of volunteer positions
- Process:
 1. Individual writing to list positions (5 minutes)
 2. Structured go-around to create master list (5-10 minutes)
 3. Small groups – each group writes a description for one position (15-20 minutes or as appropriate)
- Real work has been accomplished – less overwhelming in small bites

Follow-Up

- Begins at the meeting with minutes/note-taking. Record those present/absent, date.
- What action items resulted – who said they'd do what. Make sure items have a definite owner, description and due date.
- Define how the completed item will be reported.
- On handout minutes, action items still pending are listed BEFORE minutes of meeting (each person has assigned items). List is carried over until item is accomplished. It's implied that every action item is due at the next meeting but it doesn't always happen.