

Making Meetings Work

The expansion of remote work has led many of us to rethink how we run meetings. Email is a great tool and can help us cut down on the number of meetings we hold, but it doesn't always suffice. Sometimes it's easier to speak face-to-face, even if it is through a virtual format. That said, we can all appreciate the need to keep meetings as succinct as possible while still ensuring that all voices are heard.

To help meetings stay on the right path and encourage collaboration, even if some or all participants are remote, consider the following suggestions:



Keep it Structured

- When scheduling the meeting, make sure all participants understand the meeting goal.
- Begin with stating the purpose of the meeting to remind everyone of the goal.
- Keep the group on track – use the clock as a tool to respect set time limitations.
- Use a written agenda, preferably with time constraints assigned to each agenda item.
- Assign a participant to take minutes and/or record the meeting.
- If the meeting is longer than an hour, consider scheduling short breaks.



Engage All Participants

- Foster connections within the group with an icebreaker.
- Ask probing questions to build on ideas.
- Ensure all voices are heard by soliciting the input of those who have yet contributed.
- Redirect to other group members if particular participants are dominating the discussion.



Provide Leadership

- Acknowledge if there is disagreement, validate feelings and allow participants to share opinions.
- Table any issues for a future meeting and/or create an ad-hoc committee that aren't resolved within the allotted timeframe.
- To promote understanding, reflect back to the group what has been discussed.
- Be clear in assigning any follow up actions to specific individuals.
- At the end of the meeting, summarize any decisions made.
- Recognize that building consensus doesn't have to mean unanimous agreement but rather a decision everyone can live with.

For **meeting facilitation services** and assistance with **developing operational and strategic plans**, please visit sheerstrategy.com or contact us at (215) 680-0684 or at maddyschiering@sheerstrategy.com.