

Hosting Better Meetings

Meetings are necessary tools – but not in the manner many are run. Let's recognize we're all to blame for ineffective meetings. Good meetings, like good time management, come from a clear model of how time should be spent, plus the self-discipline to make it so. Applied to a regular meeting format, these guidelines can gain more time for you, but you'll need to recruit some colleagues to really make them work.

It begins with a 'can-do, let's get results' mindset.

Begin with a positive win-win attitude. Start looking at time wasted as squandered human life... yours! Start thinking 'how can we make the process a win-win for everyone?' Begin by determining if you even need a meeting in the first place... and if so, ask yourself these 3 questions:

What do I want? (be selfish)

Who's involved in my getting what I want? (will limit the number of participants) and, finally,

What do they want ... This is a key question. If you don't know what they want, the meeting will be twice as long as it needs to be. If you don't know – get the facts and talk to people in advance. The more you know, the more bargaining chips you have to ensure a win-win solution.

Key Points

- Ensure agenda states the purpose and provides a 'roadmap' with times shown for all items.
- Start on time with a direct restatement of the purpose, the time frame, & the agenda
- Don't begin the meeting until everyone agrees to the agenda & the time frame
- After each item – summarize! And only then fill in the 'meeting minutes form'
- Summarize at the end of the meeting, highlighting assignments & achievements
- Set agenda for next meeting... As you close the meeting, go once around the room for everyone's last words (no discussion) on the meeting & how to make the next one better. Everyone comments.

Holding Better Meetings

Uses of **meeting minute forms** enable you to hand out the minutes on the way out. If it is not your meeting to chair – be proactive. Never hesitate to ask "are we on topic?" or, "let's hold that idea until our next meeting so we can complete this item."

Help the chair succeed – **don't just sit there.**

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ronald. E. Osborn

Innovation + Speed = Responsiveness... For Success

For many, 'innovation' is a steady stream of profitable and successful new products to market in record time, or a flow of winning processes that enables a company to out-compete another when it comes to assembly genius. But being able to innovate is not enough. We must do it **faster** as the **payoffs for speed** are mega and include:

Competitive advantage – *enabling one to respond to customer & market needs quicker and longer*
Higher profitability – *revenue from new product sales - and from hitting time-sensitive marketing windows*

Fewer surprises – *the quicker one is, the less market conditions will change during launch*

The facts:

- a) New products pay off quickly with the average payback 2.49 years
- b) New products carve an average target market share of 47%
- c) The average ROI for successful new products is a whopping 97%
- d) The success rate? Ouch – the **failure rate at launch is in the 90% range** with Gary Hamel reporting in Fortune Magazine's July 9th issue, 2001 that **"For every 1000 ideas, only 100 will have enough commercial promise to merit a small-scale experiment. Only 10 of those will warrant a substantial financial commitment. And of those only a couple will turn out to be unqualified successes."**

We need the success: We need new ideas that generate products, processes or both. For leaders, the need is real as Gates insists - "Microsoft is always two years away from failure."

Defining Innovation: **"Innovation is how a firm or an individual makes money from creativity - Innovation demands creativity."** In the book "Innovation@Work" from which this article is drawn, the authors state, **"Creativity is a skill. It is not something mystical, available only to a few. It can be learned by anyone. Everyone possesses an innate capacity for creativity. But the development of this skill has been thwarted, for the most part by parents, teachers, and bosses who provide rules about what is acceptable behavior."**

The Four Types of Innovation we need – to truly get it all right.

According to creativity expert James Higgins – there are **four innovations** to be optimized for world-class excellence.

Product Innovation: Results in new products, services, or enhancements to old products or services, and generally delivers competitive advantage thru differentiation.

Process Innovation: Results in improved business processes within the organization, its supply chain & its customers. The focus is on improving effectiveness & efficiency and may include people processes, financial processes, and information processes -- any or all of which help to deliver competitive advantage through lower cost

Marketing Innovation: Relates to the marketing mix: innovative promotion, pricing, distribution, as well as product attributes other than those covered under product innovation. This frequently provides competitive advantage through differentiation and low costs.

Management Innovation: Improves the way the organization is managed and **how 'results are achieved through people'**. Innovations in organizational structure, leader-ship, or incentive systems are typical examples. This commonly provides competitive advantage through both differentiation and lower costs. practice.

Lean Thoughts