



MEETINGS

GOALS

To enable learners to:

1. Learners understand the concept of a meeting.
2. Gain knowledge of the components of meetings.
3. Learn to prepare agendas.
4. Are able to take down notes at meetings and write minutes of meeting.
5. Gain competency in compiling a 'Action Taken Report'.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Define meeting.
- ◆ Describe the format of a meeting.
- ◆ Explain requisites for conducting a meeting.
- ◆ Elucidate need for agenda.
- ◆ State elements that comprise an agenda.
- ◆ Discuss how to form an agenda.
- ◆ Learn taking down notes during meeting.
- ◆ Explicate writing down minutes of meetings.
- ◆ Discuss 'Action Taken Report'.
- ◆ Write 'Action Taken Report'.



DEFINITION

According to **Business Dictionary** a meeting is defined as, 'Formal or informal deliberative assembly of individuals called to debate certain issues and problems, and to take decisions. Formal meetings are held at definite times, at a definite place, and usually for a definite duration to follow an agreed upon agenda. In a corporate setting, they are divided into two main groups.

- (1) **Organizational meeting:** normally a regular meeting involving stockholders (shareholders) and management, such as a board meeting and annual general meeting (AGM).

- (2) **Operational meeting: regular or ad hoc meeting involving management and employees, such as a committee meeting, planning meeting, and sales meeting.**

INTRODUCTION

Meetings are part and parcel of everyday life in work places in modern times. Meetings are conducted by people within an organization to resolve any problems and issues faced while completing any work, to chalk out new strategies to promote business/ increase profitability, to exchange ideas and information, to ensure coordination on issues on the agenda and effective communication within the group/ organization. For any meeting to be successful, it needs the support of the group involved, or the organisation behind it and it must have the intention of achieving some goal or objective.

The Requisites for a Meeting are:

1. **Select the Right Participants:** The participants in the meeting have to be chosen with extreme care. Often people are included because they belong to the department or are a part of the team, or because you don't want to offend anyone. To engage in a purposeful meeting, participants must have a reason for attending; a point of view about the issue, the need to know, the authority to make a decision, or any useful information, that will add value to the discussion and lead to some conclusion.
2. **Send Intimation to all participants:** The notice for the meeting should be sent by a proper authority at least 2-3 days before the meeting so that participants have time to gather information and data required for it. It must have information about date, time, venue, names of participants and the agenda of the meeting.
3. **Set an Agenda:** An agenda must be provided before the meeting. Agendas are the framework on which the meeting stands. It communicates the subject of the meeting, the speakers, time allotted to each speaker etc.
4. **Appoint a Facilitator:** A facilitator is appointed to guide the meeting to its logical conclusion. His task is to aid the group in reaching a consensus in taking a decision. The members of the group are accountable and committed to the resolution taken by them. He ensures that the meeting stays on track, helps by providing a structure to a process, and enables cooperative decision-making without conflict.
5. **Arrive at Clear Conclusions and Formulate Next Steps:** Many times meetings fail to come to clear and unambiguous conclusions about the points under consideration. After deliberation on an agenda topic, it is necessary to summarize what was discussed; state lucidly the deductions arrived at, and decide on the future steps that need to be taken. At the conclusion of the meeting a briefly recount the proceedings and summarize the future course of action.
6. **Create Opportunities For Creativity and Participation:** In most meetings the structure is top-centric, that is, the senior management speaks and the juniors only contribute when asked to give their input. When there is lack of free flow of ideas, information and opportunities to speak, the members fail to contribute perspective, curiosity, and creativity. In such a scenario the purpose of the meeting is defeated. A meetings should be opportunity to bring multiple perspectives into the room in order to collaborate, debate, decide, and perform the real work of a team.

NEED FOR AN AGENDA

Agendas are the blueprints for building successful meetings. They are vital and essential as they:

- a. State the objective/purpose of the meeting.

- b. Inform of issues/ topics to be discussed.
- c. Keep the meeting focused on the issue. It does not allow speakers to deviate from the subjects and issues at hand.
- d. Give time to the participants understand and prepare for their roles.
- e. Allot specific time to each speaker.
- f. Inform the sequence in which the members speak.

An example of tabular agenda-

Time	Topic	Attendees	Speaker	Duration
9:00am	Introduction	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	15 minutes
9:15 am	Discussing upcoming strategy for launch of new product	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	30 minutes
9:45 am	Project Report	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	30 minutes
10:15 am	Tea break	All members		20 minutes
10:35 am	Market trends	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	25 minutes
11:00 am	Details on costing	Names of the participants	Name of the speaker	30 minutes
11:30 am	Open house	Questions and discussions from participants		20 minutes
11:50 am	Thank you note	All members	Chairperson	10 minutes

Template for Meeting Agenda:

[MEETING TITLE] - AGENDA

MEETING INFORMATION

Objective: _____

Date: 01/01/2000

Time: 8:00 AM

Location: [Enter Location]

AGENDA ITEMS	PRESENTER
1. Call to Order	[Name]
2. Pledge of Allegiance	[Name]
3. Welcome/Introduction	[Name]
4. Roll Call	[Name]
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	[Name]
6. Old Business	
A. [Item 1]	[Name]
7. New Business	
A. [Item 1]	[Name]
B. [Item 2]	[Name]
8. Additions to Agenda	
9. Calendar	[Name]
10. Adjournment	

OTHER NOTES OR INFORMATION

Recorded by: _____

Used: _____

Meeting Agenda Template © 2010 Vertex42.com

Source: **Vertex42.com**



MINUTES OF A MEETING

Minutes, also known as protocols or, informally notes, are the instant written record of a **meeting** or hearing. They typically describe the events of the **meeting** and may include a list of attendees, a statement of the issues considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions for the issues. (Wikipedia)

The Reasons for writing meeting minutes: Writing minutes is extremely important as-

- a. Various participants may have different recollections of the meeting.
- b. Diverse interpretations of action plan possible.
- c. Important tasks can be forgotten.
- d. Dates of submission of subject matter/ report/ action taken plan overlooked/ achievement of specified tasks pushed forward.
- e. A written record is always available for ready reference.
- f. Used as reminders for oneself and others.
- g. Can be required for legal reasons.

Steps in writing meeting minutes:

Points to be kept in mind while writing minutes of meeting:

1. Pre-Planning- It is essential in taking appropriate and complete notes of the meeting.
 - Use a copy of meeting agenda as a guideline to take notes and prepare the minutes.
 - Use a similar order and numbering of items as on the agenda for the meeting.
 - Note down the names of all people attending the meeting in advance.
 - All documents and handouts used or given in the meeting should be filed for future reference and to be shared with others.
 - Get clear instructions of the expectations of your role during the meeting, as well as the type of details expected in the minutes.
2. Record taking at the meeting- Understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting. Though several organizations have their own structures in place, there are several points which are common to all:
 - Mention date and time of meeting.
 - Names of all attending the meeting and also of the absentees.
 - The correction and amendments made with reference to the previous meeting minutes.
 - The decisions taken about each agenda item.
 - The necessary steps taken or will be taken with reference to the issue.
 - The future plan of action.
 - Date and time of next meeting, if decided.

Suggestions for Taking Notes:

- a. Have a format/ structure ready. Note down main points to be discussed in the agenda so that you simply jot down the all details of discussions, decisions etc. under each main/ sub point. Include space below each item on your outline for your hand-written notes which can be printed later.
- b. Keep a record of attendees –ensure that the names of all people attending the meeting are noted.
- c. Mention all absentees at the meeting.
- d. Make notes on all items for discussion on agenda side by side to ensure accuracy.
- e. Ask for any clarification if there is ambiguity at any point.
- f. Do not try to capture it all as it is impossible to write down the complete proceedings of the meeting. Therefore, write (or type) just the decisions, assignments, action steps, etc. simply, clearly and concisely.
- g. Record it –you can also record the meeting (e.g., on your smart phone, iPad, recording device, etc.). However, all participants must know that the proceedings are being recorded. The recording is useful if you need clarifications.

3. The Minutes Writing Process-

After the meeting is over; you have to write the minutes.

- Accurate recording depends on writing the report while you can recall all that happened.
- Go through your work again. You may decide to add some details and delete some matter.
- Recheck with all concerned to ensure that all decision, resolutions and motions are correctly noted.
- Ensure that all required details are noted, especially if the meetings are lengthy and long drawn deliberations have taken place.
- All notes should be brief and clear.
- Ensure proper sequence, flow and grammatical accuracy.
- Do not include any conflicts or personal comments.
- Any reference material can be attached in the appendix or mention where it can be found.

4. Circulating/Sharing Minutes of the Meeting-

If you have to circulate the minutes of the meeting, be sure that the appropriate authority has reviewed and approved the minutes. You can either send hard copies or share the minutes (if the authorities permit it) via an email.

5. Filing/Storage of Meeting Minutes-

After the final approval, the minutes need to be stored for future reference. The minutes can be stored online, in hard drives or printed and put in files.

Example of minutes of meeting:

Minutes

Date: 5th Dec, 2016

Meetings started at 9: 00 am.

Mr. Ramesh, Chairperson gave an introduction.

Mr. Kamlesh, Product Head spoke about the new product.

Ms. Shalini, Regional Manager, Business, gave a detailed project report. (market surveys, future aspects, challenges included).

Participants approved of Ms. Shalini's report. Appreciated the meticulous detailing.

Mr. Rehman, Marketing Head discussed the market scene, demand and supply and customer interest.

Mr. Satyan, Director Finance, gave details of costing. Finance team led by Mr X, Mr. Y and Mr. Z were part of the presentation.

The Chairperson declared an open house for participants to put up their concerns, and finally gave a vote of thanks.

Conclusions stated.

Proposal for more funds put forward.

Tenders to be released.

ATR will be submitted by 12th Dec, 2016.

Action Taken Report (ATR)

Action Taken Report is a report compiled few days after a meeting, stating the various actions taken as per the discussions made.

ATR must always be submitted after a gap of about 5-7 days, or more, after the meetings. This gives appropriate time for actions to be taken and the matter to be discussed/ stated in the form of a report.

Read the following sample ATR for a better understanding:

Action Taken Report

5th Dec, 2016

As per the meeting held on 5th Dec, 2016 at the Head Office of SV Technologies, following actions have been reported:

- The client had complied to deliver the goods by 4th Dec. Work done
- The client has asked for more time for installation of 600KV turbine.
- The order has been retained and client's proposal has been agreed to.

Undersigned

Director, Sales & Marketing

Director, Business



SUMMARY

This section explains the importance of planning meetings, taking down notes and finally reporting the actions taken, the meeting. The chapter on Meetings highlights the reasons for having meetings, writing the minutes of a meeting, compiling the action taken report and the detailed planning and organization required in the entire process. Examples are provided based on office room scenarios to help students understand the presentation of agendas and reports.

 **EXERCISE**

Q1. The Managing Committee of Bharat Shiksha Institute has decided to bring changes in the English and Accountancy syllabus for the first year course. Mr. Kamal Kapoor, the Academic Dean of the institute, has been assigned the task of convening a meeting of all stakeholders- subject experts, college lecturers, students and members of print and publishing department,- to decide the necessary alterations in the syllabi. As Kamal Kapoor –

Set an agenda for the meeting.(Suggestions for discussions-Review previous syllabus, identify redundant topics, suggest inclusion of latest relevant content, include constructive and useful content from student point of view, discuss time frame for completion of revamping)

- a. Inform your secretary, Ms. Swati Singh, to write the minutes of the meeting.
- b. Submit an 'Action Taken Report' to the managing committee.

(Each section should be written in about 200 words)

Q2. The Marketing Head of Aptex Products, a consumer goods company, plans to conduct a meeting to review the effectiveness of marketing policies of the previous year and plan strategies for the next year to increase the profit margin of the company. (attendees should be from marketing, advertising and media, and research and development department)

- a. Set an agenda for the meeting(suggestions for discussion- products that garnered high sales and those that failed to make the mark; reasons for poor sales; new research and development input, novel advertising means)
- b. Designate your secretary to write the minutes of the meeting.
- c. Ask the junior marketing analyst, Mr. Sudeep Roy, to submit an 'Action Taken Report' to him within seven days.

(Each section should be written in about 200 words)

Answer clues:

Q1. and Q2.

Agenda-(follow the pattern given in template)

Minutes of Meeting-- follow all points mentioned in 'record the minutes'

Action Taken Report-mention in brief how much work completed by the various members.