

BUSINESS ENGLISH

Lesson 11 – ORGANIZING A MEETING



Lesson 11 – Organizing a Meeting

Warm Up



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnJVEpyy-Bw>

Watch the video by clicking the link above and then answer these questions
You may click the “subtitle” to see the transcript.

1. What is the meeting all about?
2. Why do you think it’s an ineffective meeting.
3. Have you ever experienced this kind of meeting?

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Introduction



A meeting is **formal or informal deliberative assembly** of individuals called to debate certain issues and problems, and to take decisions. Formal meetings are held at a **definite time, place** and usually for a definite duration to follow an agreed upon agenda.

1. How often do you attend meetings?
2. Do you think meetings should always be always done at the office? Why or why not?
3. Do you sometimes feel that meetings are just a waste of time? Why or why not?

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Word Combination with Meeting

<i>arrange</i>	<i>a meeting</i>	organize a meeting
<i>chair</i>		be in charge of a meeting
<i>attend</i>		go to a meeting
<i>miss</i>		not go to a meeting
<i>postpone</i>		change a meeting to a later time
<i>cancel</i>		not have a planned meeting

1. I have *arranged a meeting* between the marketing and the creative departments.
2. He was about to *chair a meeting* in Venice of EU Ministers.
3. I am *going to attend* the Council Meeting in a few hours.
4. She had to *miss the meeting* for some personal reasons.
5. The *meeting was postponed* to Wednesday next week.
6. He considered *cancelling the meeting* due to the increment weather.

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DISCUSSION

- How to organize a successful meeting

Step 1: Do you really need a meeting?

Too many times, business meetings are scheduled unnecessarily. It's not unusual to find yourself in a meeting where a simple communication could have been all that was required. The scenario where multiple stakeholders are needed to regularly communicate and share information such as a large project, the key to success is efficient planning. How many stakeholders are involved? How often do they need to meet? What is the structure of the meeting? and, what are the objectives?

Not only will this enable you to work more effectively but you will save people's time, money - especially if meeting face to face requires travel, and spend more time focusing on the things that matter, like delivering the project.

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DISCUSSION

- **Discuss whether you need to set up a meeting for the following issues or concerns.**
 - (a) reach a decision on cost-cutting project
 - (b) brainstorm for solutions for low sales
 - (c) promote a sense of accountability
 - (d) gather status-only reports for areas of little activity
 - (e) collect current update for the newest marketing strategy
 - (f) secure information on the deliveries made last month.
 - (g) recommendations for the improvement of work-stations
 - (h) reallocation of funding.
 - (i) launch of a new marketing campaign
 - (j) compile a list of activities for an upcoming promotional event

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Step 2: Who needs to attend?

As strange as this sounds, not everyone who attends a meeting needs to be there. All too often, meetings are canceled, moved or simply never get arranged because people who don't have to be in attendance just want to be there, causing delays and frustration all round.

So, when arranging your meeting, decide who the key stakeholders are, who are the required attendees and those who are optional. To help support your optional people feel more comfortable about not having to be present, make sure that you have comprehensive meeting notes and minutes so that updates can be provided after the event.

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DISCUSSION



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wb6Oc1_SdJw&t=19s

You may click the “subtitle” to see the transcript.

- What did they discuss?
- Who are the participants in the meeting?
- Do you think Marcus invited the right people for the meeting?

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Exercise

Activity I. Choose the correct word to complete the sentence.

1. Ms. Jones _____ (missed / arranged) the meeting because she was late for work.
2. She decided to _____ (cancel/ arrange) the meeting because there was nothing to talk about.
3. We can _____ (postpone / cancel) the meeting until next week if necessary.
4. I asked my secretary to _____ (arrange / miss) the meeting next week, but there were no rooms available.
5. They _____ (attended/postponed) the meeting, but they didn't hear anything interesting.
6. This meeting is very important. Don't _____ (miss/attend) it!

Use the expressions in your own sentences.

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Agendas

AGENDA

Staff meeting, 25 January

Venue: Meeting room 3

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the last meeting

1 Car parking

2 Company restaurant

3 Holiday dates

4 **AOB**

Here is an agenda. An **agenda** is a list of items or points to talk about at a meeting. It begins with the **date** and the **venue**. Before the meeting, someone sends out the agenda.

If you cannot attend a meeting, you **send your apologies** for not being able to attend. At the beginning, someone reads out these messages.

The **minutes of the meeting** are written notes of what is said and decided in the meeting. During the meeting, someone **takes the minutes**.

The last item on the agenda is usually **AOB (any other business)**.

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Exercise

Activity II. Complete this memo with the words inside the box.

agenda attend items minutes venue

MEMO

From: Chief Executive To: All managers

Please find enclosed the (1) for next week's meeting. Please make a note of the (2) : we are meeting in room 7. Please let me know if you are unable to (3)

Please find attached a copy of the (4) from the last meeting.

If you want me to add other (5) to the agenda, please let me know.

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Exercise

Activity III. Match A and B to form the correct expression them match with their meanings below.

Column A

1. attend
2. send
3. send out
4. take

Column B

- A. your apologies
- B. the minutes
- C. the agenda
- D. a meeting

1. *make the formal record of a meeting*
2. *say that you will not be able to come to a meeting*
3. *got to a meeting*
4. *give people a list of things to talk about at a meeting*

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Types of Meetings



Most meetings occur **face-to-face**, with the **chair** – the person in charge – and the participants all in the same room. But there are also **virtual meetings**, with participants in different locations connected by **video link** in a system of **videoconferencing**.

**Compare and contrast face-to-face and virtual meetings.
What are their merits and demerits?**

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Types of Meetings

A video-conference has the following advantages:

- It avoids the participants having to spend time travelling to meet each other.
- Saves travel costs.
- The participants in different locations are able to work on the same electronic document.
- Seeing the person that you are communicating with can give important visual clues that are not available during a telephone conversation.
- It can be used to allow an expert to investigate a problem without making a site visit, for example an engineer could view components that have failed so that the correct replacement parts can be supplied.

The disadvantages of video-conferencing are:

- A high bandwidth communication link is required to transmit and receive high quality images.
- There is a short time lag between speaking and receiving a response that can disrupt the natural flow of a conversation.
- High quality dedicated video-conferencing systems are expensive to buy.

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Exercise

Activity IV. Complete this text with the correct forms of expressions from the previous page. Some expressions can be used more than once.

In our company, top managers based in different (1) no longer fly to (2) meetings with each other. Modern (3) systems give you the feeling that the other participants are in the same room with you. Of course, the chair can be in any (4) too. Meetings using a (5) mean that managers don't have to spend hours on international flights, and these (6) meetings are much cheaper and easier to organize.

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DISCUSSION

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Step 3: How much time do you need?

When arranging meetings, people tend to get stuck with setting the duration as either an hour or half an hour as a minimum. Generally, most peoples work days tend to fall into seven and a half hours, meaning that on a busy day, three one hour meetings will diminish their work day by half, leaving little time to settle into getting other jobs done and taking a break. If you are small business with limited meeting room options, this also puts a strain on the utilisation of these rooms and they become fully booked with just a handful of meetings.

Before booking, look at the purpose of the meeting and set the time appropriately. If your meeting is a short, snappy update such as a 'stand up', keep it to ten or fifteen minutes. If you have a conference call that may take slightly longer than half an hour, don't set an hour, plan for 45 minutes instead. You'll be surprised at how much time and availability you will free up by being vigilant around meeting duration.

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DISCUSSION

- How to organize a successful meeting

Step 4: What do you need from your meeting room?

Whether you are arranging a simple update meeting, brain storming for that next big project, or presenting to the board, consider what you will need from your meeting room including equipment and environment.

If you are brainstorming, make sure you have a white board in the room or a flip chart available to take notes, draw diagrams and most importantly, pens that work!

If you are presenting at a meeting where senior staff or board members will be present, make sure that the correct equipment is available for you to present with confidence and that the room itself is representative of the importance of the occasion.

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Exercise

Activity V. Write an agenda for a meeting in your organization. Make use of common issues and problems being dealt with in your company. State the date, venue and the points to talk about at the meeting.



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How to Take Meeting Minutes

Before the Meeting	During the Meeting	After the Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose your recording tool• Make sure your tool of choice is in working order and have a backup just in case your original one fails.• Read the meeting agenda before the meeting starts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pass around an attendance sheet and make sure everyone signs in.• Make sure you know who everyone is.• Note the time the meeting begins.• Don't try to write down every single comment.• Write down all motions, who made them, and the results of votes, if any.• If votes on any motions or discussions are deferred until the next meeting, make a note of that.• Record the ending time of the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type up the minutes as soon as possible• Include the name of the organization, title of the committee, type of meeting and its purpose.• Give the times it began and ended.• Provide the list of attendees and a note about who ran the meeting• Proofread the minutes before you submit them.• Submit them to the person who ran the meeting unless instructed to do otherwise.

**Next Lesson:
CHAIRING A MEETING**

The End