

## Why

Research and experience shows that managers of big companies spend up to 75% of their time in meetings and 50% of these meetings are seen as a waste of time!

## What

Basic guidelines for designing your meetings to be more efficient and effective.

## How

### Step 1:

Evaluate the current efficiency and effectiveness of your meetings by asking participants how they rate the meetings (effective, efficient, useful, inspiring?). Ask for tips on how to improve meetings. Take a moment to calculate how much cost in terms of time and money this will incur and compare this to the benefits. Share this with your team.

### Step 2:

Based on the results of step 1, start by implementing the following rules and guidelines.

### Step 3:

Conduct a short evaluation and deliver feedback at the end of each meeting.

Basic rules and guidelines:

- Organize time to prepare for the meeting. Send participants the agenda and meeting papers in advance.
- Begin and end the meeting on time. Late-comers are responsible for missing part of the meeting; don't repeat anything for them.
- For everyone: be alert and to the point and don't restate what has already been said.
- Make a list of actions and review the progress made at each meeting.
- Address undesirable behavior and the impact of this behavior.
- Conduct a short evaluation and deliver feedback at the end of each meeting.

The meeting:

- Most agenda items consists of 3 parts: image formation, opinion formation, decision-making.
- Sometimes an item is only about sharing information or forming opinions. Be clear about the purpose of each topic on the agenda.

Although problem-solving and decision-making are different processes, it is often necessary to combine them when making a complex decision. Systematically incorporating problem-solving and decision-making tools can help you make fully-informed decisions either individually or as a group.

The 7-step strategy is:

1. Create a constructive environment.
2. Investigate the situation in detail.
3. Generate good alternatives.
4. Explore the options.
5. Select the best solution.
6. Evaluate the plan.
7. Communicate the decision and take action.

Decision-making in more detail:

- Identify the purpose of your decision. What exactly is the problem to be solved? Why should it be solved?
- Gather information. What factors does the problem involve?
- Identify necessary criteria to evaluate alternatives. What standards and criteria should the solution meet?
- Brainstorm and list different possible choices. Generate ideas for possible solutions.
- Evaluate each choice in terms of its consequences. Use your standards and criteria to determine the pros and cons of each alternative.
- Determine the best option. This is much easier after completing the above steps.
- Put the decision into action. Transform your decision into a specific action plan. Execute the plan.
- Evaluate the outcome of your decision and action plan. What lessons can be learned? This is an important step for further development of your decision-making skills and judgement.

## When

When you feel your meetings are unproductive, too long, demotivating etc.

### Skills and necessary training

Meeting facilitation skills.

### Possible workshop exercise

Make an agenda and prepare a Short Cycle Steering meeting.

### Critical success factors

Discipline.  
Awareness and willingness from all participants to improve meetings.