

## Hold Effective Meetings

The next thing that I want to talk about in terms of getting you to exponentially improve your performance and your productivity - getting to peak productivity - is holding effective meetings. Most companies spend way too much time meeting. They have unnecessary meetings, the meetings go way to long, and it's just not what needs to be done.

Meetings are, however, critical to solving issues and getting the team to work together. So I'm going to give you some meeting tips.

First tip - You only want to meet when necessary. There is no need to meet when it's not necessary. Second tip - Keep your meetings tight. Meetings beyond one hour, they lose steam. They lose focus. A one-hour meeting, max. Keep it tight. You need to have an agenda - a set agenda and a set goal for the meeting. Like with everything else, without written goals, you are not going to be successful.

So, meeting of an hour or less, set agenda, set goals. When possible, no food. We have fun meetings that are team bonding meetings where we have food, but our real meetings don't have food. You do not want food at a meeting. Food causes meeting to start late because you are waiting for food. It slows down the meeting. It extends them. These people are having fun, enjoying themselves. They want to eat and spend more time. That's not what you want. A meeting is to accomplish a goal. No food if possible.

Next - be punctual to meetings. It forces others to be punctual. It allows you to start the meeting on time, and teaches everyone to be respectful of your time.

It reminds me of the story. A priest and the politician. Time for a brief story here. After 25 years in the same parish, Father O'Shay was saying his farewells at his retirement dinner. And a key member of his congregation, who was a lead politician, had been asked to make a presentation - a short speech - but was arriving late to the parish. So, the priest took upon himself to fill the time, and he stood up at the microphone and he said, "I remember the first confession that I heard 25 years ago when I first started, and it actually worried me as to what sort of place I had come to. And the first confession that I heard remains the worst confession I've ever heard."

"The boy came in. He told me he had stolen a TV set from his neighbor. He said he had lied to the police. He said that he had stolen money from his parents. He said that he slept with his girlfriend, giving her venereal disease. And you can imagine what I was thinking and how nervous I was that all of my parishioners will be like this. However, I am pleased to say that as the days passed, I realized that the people here are very kind and very nice - very, very decent people."

And at this point the politician has finally arrived. He apologizes for being late, he came to the stage, he stepped up the microphone, and he said, "I always remember when Father O'Shay first came to our parish. In fact, I'm pretty certain I was the first person in the parish to ever give him a confession."

So little joke here but, you want to keep your meetings tight. You want to start your meetings on time, and you want to show up on time. You want to show up for your meetings on time so you can set the tone and get your meetings to be very, very effective and productive.

Follow up thing on meetings. I want your meetings to be actionable. Too many meetings end with non-action. Why did you have the meeting in the first place? You need to have somebody responsible for documenting the key meeting points and creating to-do assignments with deadlines. So when you leave that meeting, there should be some sort of documentation of the key points that were discussed and what the outcomes were, and what the to-do items were.

So, Bob is going to do this by February 8, and Joe by May 11 - he is going to accomplish this. You need to make your meetings actionable. End with not only, "Hey, this is what our new plan is." But once again, we need to break down the goals to plans, and the plans to action items. And you need to assign those action items to individuals who own those action items, and understand what the deliverable is, and understand the completion date. That's how a meeting ends. It doesn't end before that time - before it is actionable, or before there are to-do assignments with deadlines.