

How To Run Meetings

CMPUT 299
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Version 1.0

Meetings, Bloody Meetings

- Written by John Cleese and Antony Jay
- Starring John Cleese and Robert Hardy
- Video Arts, 1993
- 34 min

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Meetings, Bloody Meetings

- Survey of 1000 top executives revealed that approximately 1/3 of time spent in meetings was a waste
- On average, higher levels of management spent 17 h per week in meetings
- Bad habits can spread from upper management down
- Running meetings can be taught properly

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5 Main Points

- Plan
- Inform
- Prepare
- Structure and Control
- Summarize and Record

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Plan the Meeting

- Ask what the meeting was supposed to achieve?
- What would have happened if there was no meeting?
- Make sure you know what the meeting is about

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Inform

- Ensure that others know what the meeting is about
 - What is being discussed?
 - Why is it being discussed?
 - What is to be achieved by the discussion?
 - Who is necessary for the discussion to be effective?
- Make an agenda
- Agenda is not just headings but a briefing to define the purpose of each point

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Prepare

- Get items on agenda in their proper order
 - Look for connections between various items and arrange appropriately
- Give only time that is due to each subject
 - Do not waste time on unnecessary points

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Structure and Control

- Guide discussions to serve a purpose
- Keep discussions on topic
- Structure the discussion in the proper order:
 - State the proposition – what is to be discussed
 - Evidence – what are the various sides of the issue and what are the facts that affect them
 - Arguments – what does the evidence mean
 - Conclusion – make the final case for the various sides
 - Action – make a final decision on the issue

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Summarize and Record

- Ensure that everyone in the meeting understands the decisions
- Record the discussion and the decisions so they can referenced in the future
- Record the person responsible for the actions in each decision made

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More Bloody Meetings

- Written by Antony Jay
- Starring John Cleese
- Video Arts, 1995
- 26 min

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More Bloody Meetings

- Procedures aren't everything in a meeting; you must also properly manage the people
- 3 laws of controlling meetings and 4 techniques for maintaining each
 - Unite the Group
 - Focus the Group
 - Mobilize the Group

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Unite the Group

- Let off steam
 - Don't let people bottle things up
- Don't take sides
- Bring in the non-combatants
- Stick to facts
 - Opinions can cause more confrontations and don't resolve the issue

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Focus the Group

- Stay alert and watch out for irrelevant contributions
 - Keep everyone to the point
- Keep a hand on the wheel
 - Know where the discussion is headed
- Test comprehension
 - Ask for elaboration on points that are not fully understood
- Paraphrase and check back
 - Ensure that everyone understands the point being made

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Mobilize the Group

- Protect the weak and keep the strong under control
 - Draw out suggestions from those that are being overpowered
- Check around the group and collect all contributions
- Record all suggestions to avoid losing good points
- Build up ideas, don't knock them down
 - Build a decision rather than reaching for a decision just to have a solution

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