

## **MANAGING**

This is an excerpt from a book titled “ **20 Steps to Better Management**” by **John McBride** and **Nick Clark**. Chapter 11 titled “Communicating Clearly” is the focus for this edition of the newsletter.

### **Team Meetings**

Meetings are a major aspect of managers’ working lives, taking up as much as 40 per cent of each working day.

Research shows that those who run meetings well are perceived to be better managers by both superiors and peers; those who fail to run or contribute to meetings effectively are considered to lack vital skills (which in turn affects their promotion prospects).

It’s also worth knowing that two out of three meetings fail to meet their goals and over 50 per cent of the time spent in meetings is wasted. This can be due to:

- A lack of clear objectives or purpose
- Disorganized planning
- Ineffective procedures/lack of control
- A lack of conclusions or follow-up

### **Why call a meeting?**

It is essential that the reason for holding a meeting is clearly established. If a meeting isn’t the most effective method of communication, don’t call one.

Team meetings are particularly appropriate for delivering a core brief relating to the organization as a whole, and to communicate information relevant to a whole department or team. They can help people process information and determine what it means to them both as individuals and as team members. They can also help generate feedback and ideas, and create consensus.

Legitimate reasons for calling a meeting include:

- To reach a decision or decide on a policy plan of action as a team
- To help someone else make a decision
- To inform
- To obtain or pool information
- To solve a problem
- To air a grievance (or grievances)
- To discuss new ideas or to create them

Always ask yourself beforehand:

- What do I want this meeting to achieve?
- What would happen if we didn’t call this meeting?
- When this meeting is over, how will we know it was successful?

The answers should help you establish whether or not a meeting is really necessary, clarify objectives and highlight the criteria by which you’ll know whether or not a meeting has been successful.

### **Holding effective meetings**

Meetings that make a difference don’t just happen by themselves. You must make sure that they:

- Have clear objectives that are realistic, focused and measurable
- Are introduced with positive language such as ‘develop’, ‘decide’, or ‘recommend’, rather than vague alternatives such as ‘discuss’, or ‘explore’
- Have an effective facilitator

- Are held in a suitable place (in terms of size, resources, possible disturbances, etc)
- Start and end on time
- Follow a written agenda and stay on track
- Decide action to be taken and agree follow-up procedures