



Second Strike

Basic Stuff for Meetings...

Meetings can be the most boring thing to do with your time, or they can be exciting and get lots of things done.

Some tricks to help meetings go smoothly.

1. **Chairperson**
Sometimes meetings get out of hand, either too many people speaking, or no-one speaking, or discussion gets off the topic. A chairperson is someone who has the job of keeping the meeting moving, making sure everyone gets a chance to talk and making sure that the meeting actually does make decisions.
2. **Agenda**
This basically means a list of things that you want to discuss or make decisions about during the meeting. An agenda helps keep everyone on the topic and gives you a way to see how much you're doing.
3. **Minutes**
This is just a silly word meaning the notes that you take during a meeting. It's amazing how many meetings start and no-one can remember what they decided last time. So the discuss it all over again. Sometimes people do remember, but they remember it differently to others in the group. Sometimes you are sure that a job was supposed to be done by now, and it hasn't happened, but nobody can remember who was supposed to be doing it. Notes taken during a meeting can be looked at again to remind everyone what you have already done, or what jobs needed doing and by who.

In short, minutes are a list of the decisions that you make at a meeting.
4. **Voting**
Sometimes you can't get everyone in the room to agree on the one thing. This can mean that discussion just never ends and nothing gets done. One way around this is to have a vote. The chairperson usually decides when it is time to have a vote, after some good discussion, but not too much. Voting can be by a show of hands or by a "secret ballot". A secret ballot is where you write your vote on a piece of paper without showing anyone.
5. **Starting/Ending**
Starting and ending on time is very helpful, as people don't like feeling that their time is slipping away from them, and it makes sure everyone realises that "if you're late, we won't wait."

It can be a good idea to start and end on positive notes too, such as starting by congratulating people on good work, and ending by saying something encouraging.

6. Incentives

Food is always the obvious incentive to encourage people to come to meetings, but there are hundreds of other incentives. These can make people feel like they are valued

7. **Come prepared**

If everyone knows before the meeting what you will be discussing (use the agenda!) or if you have an idea you want to raise at the meeting, then it saves a lot of time and makes a meeting more fun. Do a survey of students before the meeting, or get prices of things before being asked to. That way, when asked in a meeting “well we can’t talk about that until we know how much it costs...” you already have an answer.

The only way to really make meetings work in your favour is to think about what *you* are doing. It’s all very well to think about how to deal with people who make meetings difficult, but make sure that person isn’t YOU first. Are you interrupting things? Have you thought about what you want from this meeting before arriving?