

COMMAND THE ZOOM

BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADING VIRTUAL TEAM MEETINGS

MARCH 25, 2020

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3 Elements of Human Nature

Keeping people engaged during a virtual meeting can be challenging in normal times. Throw in the uncertainty that comes with an unexpected situation like COVID-19 and you it becomes much harder.

As a leader, be aware that your team could be experiencing reactions that are competing for your attention:

1. **Fear** – it's a natural reaction to the unknown. People could be worried about their job, their financial security, and their health.
2. **Habit** – it takes time to adapt to a new environment. If people aren't used to working from home they need time to settle in and adjust to new routines.
3. **Curiosity** – people want to know what's going on and they will be distracted by the constant stream of information coming in.

5 Traits of Effective Meeting Facilitators

1. Good time management – start on time, end on time; manage participant's and panelists.
2. Assertive communication skills - be clear with expectations up front. Let people know how much time they will have and how you will let them know when their time is up. Agree on a plan. Speak up, don't wait for them to take a breath.
3. Ability to solicit input – ask open-ended questions. Call on people.
4. Multi-tasking – you have to pay attention to the time, to people's facial expressions, questions, take notes, etc. Find a helper and delegate if needed.
5. Positive attitude – set the right tone by being receptive to questions and other viewpoints. Avoid getting defensive, arguing, or shutting people down.

10 Tips for Better Virtual Meetings

1. Keep your camera at eye level – weird angles are distracting.
2. Check your surroundings for clutter or other distractions
3. Check your lighting
4. Mute yourself when not talking*
5. Practice good grooming*
6. Dress for work* - especially important for your mental well-being when working from home. According to the American Psychological Association, “maintaining a daily routine can help both adults and children preserve a sense of order and purpose in their lives despite the unfamiliarity of isolation and quarantine.” This means you should take a shower, brush your teeth and take care of yourself.
7. Refrain from typing when you're not muted
8. Start on time, end on time* - be courteous and start on time, end 10 minutes early to allow people to get to their next meeting.
9. Have a clear purpose for meeting* - some good reasons include: keeping the team informed, training, staying connected, problem solving/idea sharing.
10. Distribute agenda and relevant documents in advance* - let people know what will be discussed and give them time to think about it.

*Great tips for when in-person meetings come back too!

Sample - Weekly Team Meeting Agenda

Tip: Don't reinvent the wheel for recurring meetings. Create it once and include in the meeting invite. Send supplemental documentation separately.

Tip: Start the meeting with something valuable, but not critical, like individual updates or accomplishments. This allows you to start on time but not repeat yourself for the late arrivals.

Customer Service Team Meeting Agenda

March 25, 2020 | 9am – 10am CT

- Team member accomplishments
- Review action items from last meeting
- New business and department updates
- Upcoming events
- Recap action items and due dates
- Adjourn

Round-a-Bout

This is a no-fail strategy to get input from everyone on your team, even those who are more reserved. It deters off-topic discussions that get the meeting off track; it limits sharing by the 'dominators'; your team feels heard; and you will get a lot of great ideas!

Choose ONE topic (ex: what ideas do you have for improving our team meetings)

Give people 1 – 2 minutes to think and write down their responses

Gather responses one at a time (each person shares one idea at a time)

'Pass' if no idea

Go around 2x to catch new ideas that were missed the first time

No discussion during idea gathering phase

Questions?

I can help! Don't hesitate to reach out by phone or email.

Thank you for participating in this training.

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