Running an Effective Meeting

Many people consider meetings a total waste of time. You don’t want anyone saying that about your meetings! How do you beat the odds?

Clear goals, enthusiasm, organization and preparation are key.

Running a meeting will take some work on your part.

Here are some tips to make your meetings productive and worthwhile for the group:

• Come prepared. Don’t forget to bring your calendar, along with a laptop, cell phone, or old-fashioned paper and pencil.

• Use an agenda. Arrive with an outline of what you need to accomplish in the scheduled time.

• Watch for non-verbal communication. Smiles, frowns, raised eyebrows and sleepy head nods are just some of the non-verbal signs students will exhibit to help you gauge how the meeting is going.

• Think visually. Whether you use PowerPoint, a white board or useful handouts, provide something tangible to participants so they can better comprehend what you’re saying.

• Assign a note taker or secretary. It may seem unnecessary to you at first, but you’ll soon find that having minutes of your meeting is invaluable, for you and others. Assign a scribe to take, distribute and file the notes of the meeting.

Here are some questions to ask yourself about how you run your meetings:

◊ Do I have clear objectives for the meetings?

◊ Do I prepare an agenda and distribute it in advance of the meeting?

◊ Do I follow the agenda?

◊ Do I start the meeting promptly?

◊ Do I manage time and conclude the meeting as scheduled?

◊ Do I elicit everyone’s participation?

◊ Do I know how to help in the resolution of conflict?

◊ Do I summarize accomplishments at the end of the meeting and clarify any action to be taken?

◊ Do I, or does someone else, prepare and distribute a record of the meeting to the participants afterward?

◊ Do I take agreed upon actions?

◊ Do I follow-up on actions that others have agreed to take?

• Stick to the clock. Identify an ending time for each meeting. If it’s necessary to extend the discussion, allow a moment for those participants who need to be somewhere else to leave.