

9 "M's"

for Meetings

that Motivate

Tired of people running a mile every time you mention the 'M' word? Meetings have that affect, don't they?

And you can't blame people for reacting that way. Think about all the meetings you've sat through where you've longed for someone to come in and drag you off and torture you. It seemed like a viable alternative at the time, didn't it? You struggle to stay awake. You struggle in the uncomfortable chair. You struggle to keep track of the point. You struggle to keep your attention from wandering back to that fly on the wall. You struggle to stop yourself from racing to the door and begging to be set free!

And now it's your turn to convene these meetings and you hate it because no one wants to come. What's the secret of running an interesting and effective meeting that people will want to attend? Free back and neck massages? Good thought. Keep that for when all else fails. But you shouldn't need to resort to bribery - because there is a better way. You can get people to come to your meetings – and not only enjoy them and contribute – but they'll want to come back.

I know you're chomping at the bit to get to it – so let's dive right in with the Nine 'Ms' for effective meetings...

1. Make your meeting notices zappy.

This is your first direct point of contact. Some tips:

- Print your notice on coloured paper.
- Create a catchy title.
- Use an eye-catching cartoon or illustration.
- Keep text to a minimum - short lead, content in point form, then briefly outline what's in it for the participant.

2. Make them fill in a name tag.

This: Involves people from the start; and builds speedy rapport - you can call attendees by name! Ensure tags are large enough to be read from the back row.

3. Meet and greet them on arrival.

Break the ice immediately! A smile, a handshake and a friendly exchange does wonders to build empathy.

4. Music them on arrival.

Music signals '...we want you to relax, enjoy yourself.' Music has them uplifted and feeling positive from the

first minute. For best results choose popular light classical or movie themes.

5. Make them mix before you start.

This loosens up the audience and promotes group interaction. Give the first arrivals tasks like telling others to:

- Print their names in large, clear letters; and
- Use different coloured pens to indicate length of service with the company etc.



6. Make your housekeeping announcements.

People like to know where they're going. And you want to keep their attention. Avoid distracting questions like: "Where's the loo?", "What time's the lunch?" Sort those things out before you launch into the body of your presentation.

7. Make them aware of your mission.

In a friendly, upbeat way, remind them what the meeting's all about. Don't be afraid to be natural, and use humour.

8. Make your start fun.

Even using all the above, it's likely you haven't yet won over everyone. Someone looks sceptical; someone yawned. Maybe she's just tired. Or maybe she's unconvinced you'll deliver. So, wake 'em up! Tell an amusing story (against yourself is fine). Refrain from joke telling unless you're a natural - you want them to smile, not pass notes to see if anyone has a noose they can borrow!

9. Make them move in these five minutes.

Many good meeting ice-breakers require people to move around. You want them awake, alive and participating. Try allowing two minutes to meet a stranger; collect information etc.

The beginning of any meeting is the part that can make or break it. For meetings that motivate, the nine "M's" ensures you're off to a flying start!

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