Candidate Resource and Assessment

BSBADM502B

Manage Meetings

Whether as an individual, or as part of a group, real progress depends on entering whole-heartedly into the process and being motivated to make you a more deeply satisfied human being.

Focusing on your training needs
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“You’re either part of the solution or part of the problem”.

Eldridge Cleaver

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Check transcribed meeting notes to ensure they reflect a true and accurate record of the meeting, and are formatted in accordance with organisational procedures and meeting conventions

Distribute and store minutes and other follow-up documentation within designated time lines, and according to organisational requirements

Report outcomes of meetings as required, within designated time lines

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Focus on

Your Area of Influence

Use considered risk taking in your ‘grey’ area

And others will follow you!

Legend

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Qualification Pathways

This unit of competency is provided to meet the requirements of BSB07 Business Services Training Package although can be used in a range of different qualifications. The BSB07 Business Services Training Package does not state how a qualification is to be achieved. Rather, Registered Training Organisations are required to use the qualification rules to ensure the needs of the learner and business customer are met. This is to be achieved through the development of effective learning programs delivered in an order that meets the stated needs of nominated candidates and business customers.

Qualification Rules

Qualification requirements include core and elective units. Specific unit of competency requirements that are stated in the qualification description determines the unit mix. Registered Training Organisations then work with learners and business customers to select elective units relevant to the work outcome, local industry requirements and the qualification level.

All vocational education qualifications must lead to a work outcome. BSB07 Business Services Training Package qualifications allows for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to vary programmes to meet:

- Specific needs of a business or group of businesses.
- Skill needs of a locality or a particular industry application of business skills.
- Maximum employability of a group of students or an individual.

When packaging a qualification elective units are to be selected from an equivalent level qualification unless otherwise stated.
"If learning comes through experience, it follows that the more one participates in guided experiences, the more one learns. Therefore venturing into uncharted waters - and experiencing the failures that may occur - is an important part of organisational learning."

Gould, DiBella, Nevis

Introduction

This unit of competency is about being able to oversee meeting preparation processes, chairing meetings, organising the minutes and reporting meeting outcomes. It will help you with the skills you need to demonstrate competency for the unit BSBADM502B Manage Meetings. This is one of the units that make up the Certificates in Business.

This manual is broken up into three sections. They are:

- Prepare for Meetings
- Conduct Meetings
- Follow Up Meetings

At the conclusion of this training you will be asked to complete an assessment pack for this unit of competency. The information contained in this resource will assist you to complete this task.

On competent completion of the assessment, you will have demonstrated your ability to oversee meeting implementation.
Prepare for Meetings

It pays to be obvious, especially if you have a reputation for subtlety.  

- **Develop agenda in line with stated meeting purpose**
- **Ensure style and structure of meeting is appropriate to its purpose**
- **Identify meeting participants and notify them in accordance with organisational procedures**
- **Confirm meeting arrangements in accordance with requirements of meeting**
- **Despatch meeting papers to participants within designated time lines**

### Productive Meetings

Meetings can be useful. Workers can learn directly rather than through the grapevine about new personnel policies or participate in decisions affecting them. Subordinates can keep supervisors and co-workers informed of new developments or conditions encountered on the job. Often workers come in contact with potential problems first and early detection can save time and expense. Meetings, then, are held to inform people about policies or operations, gather information, conduct training, resolve problems, or make decisions.

What makes for an effective meeting? Having a purpose, preparing ahead of time, setting goals during the meeting, and making provisions for follow-through and assessment afterwards are critical. A successful meeting is like a team who carefully cuts, trims and prepares a portion of meat to be hung by a hook. A hook is added; the meat is lifted and placed on a rail, and sent on its way. Oftentimes much work takes place in meetings. The participants may have cut, cleaned and even lifted the heavy carcass, but they have failed to put it on the rail. Next time, they will have to clean and lift it again.

This training is about conducting better meetings so that the outcomes are achieved through the best practice.
Agendas

A well-prepared and organised agenda is an important tool for helping groups hold orderly, efficient meetings. An organised agenda is not thrown together in a few minutes. Thought and planning are necessary to develop an agenda that provides meaningful information but does not become a lengthy narrative document. In addition, a carefully prepared agenda can influence the outcome of a meeting.

Tradition, policy, or law may determine the form of an agenda. Many organisations have a “standard” agenda on file.

A meeting agenda may be relatively brief and sketchy or longer and more informative. No matter its form, a good agenda helps members prepare for the meeting, and during the meeting, it helps participants follow the order of business and provides a place to take notes.

The following steps are essential to developing a good meeting agenda:

- **Determine the level of attention appropriate for each agenda item.** Questions to consider include these: Will an announcement be sufficient? Will discussion be in order? Will a vote be required?

- **Carefully consider the order of topics on the agenda.** It is important to plan how much time to allocate for each agenda item, particularly if the group has specific start and end times. List those items that require immediate attention first, in case time runs short. **Indicate on the agenda which group member is responsible for each agenda item, what outcome is needed or possible, and any background information that will help members understand the issues involved.**

Consent Agenda

One way to streamline meeting procedures is to adopt the use of a consent agenda. The consent agenda allows groups to take care of routine business items in one action. Those items that are standard, non-controversial, and/or self-explanatory can be consolidated and approved with one motion and vote. Examples of such items include previous meeting and committee meeting minutes, routine correspondence, office reports, and confirmation of actions required in the constitution.

Many groups are in the habit of discussing every topic on the agenda. Not all items require discussion or deliberation. Furthermore, some items may have been discussed and explained previously, and additional discussion will be repetitive and unnecessary. A consent agenda guards against unnecessary discussion, thus saving time for the more important issues. As the name implies, items on the consent agenda assume general agreement, or consensus, on the approval or vote.

For a consent agenda to be useful, the agenda and information for each item must be distributed to the group members well in advance of a meeting. This practice permits thorough examination of all agenda items without using valuable meeting time. The category “consent agenda” should be listed as an item on the meeting agenda, and each item covered by this category should be identified separately in the document. If a group member has a question, it can be directed to the person responsible for that item prior to the meeting. If the question is not resolved to the member’s satisfaction, the member may request, during the meeting, that the item be removed from the consent agenda and discussed separately before a vote.
Effective Agendas

Develop the agenda together with key participants in the meeting. Think of what overall outcome you want from the meeting and what activities need to occur to reach that outcome. The agenda should be organised so that these activities are conducted during the meeting.

In the agenda, state the overall outcome that you want from the meeting and design it so that participants get involved early by having something for them to do right away and so they come on time. Next to each major topic, include the type of action needed, the type of output expected (decision, vote, action assigned to someone), and time estimates for addressing each topic. Don’t overly design meetings; be willing to adapt the meeting agenda if members are making progress in the planning process.

Agenda Items

Typically, an Agenda will include the following items:

- Correspondence
- Date, time and location of meeting
- Date of next meeting
- General business
- Major agenda items
- Matters or business arising from the minutes
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Reports
- Statement of the meeting’s purpose
- Welcome.

The purpose of the meeting will dictate the items for inclusion. Think carefully, and be realistic about the timing before despatching the Agenda.

Your organisation may have specific requirements for standard meetings. Check to see if there is such information and if so, closely follow the guidelines.
Sample Formal Agenda

Name of organisation:

Date:

Time: (start and finish)

Location:

1. Chairperson opens meeting
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of previous meeting and confirmation of minutes
4. Business arising from minutes
5. Correspondence – inward and outward. Endorsed by committee
6. Business arising from correspondence
7. Coordinator’s report
   a) Equipment upgrade
   b) Future venues for meetings
   c) Sponsorship
8. Treasurer’s report
9. Report from sub-committees
   a) Chook Raffle
   b) Handover Arrangements
10. Adjourned business
    a) Appointment of new Chairperson
11. General business
    a) New membership drive
12. Date of next meeting
13. Chairperson closes meeting
Meeting Style and Structure

Clarifying the purpose of a meeting can sometimes prove difficult, taking a lot of time and not result in the shared understanding that’s vital to move forward effectively. ‘Defining the ‘purpose’ should address ‘why ‘we’ve come together to discuss this specific agenda item or topic.’ The ‘process’, on the other hand, tells the group ‘how’ we’re going to manage the discussion to achieve the purpose. It can be very difficult to ensure everyone’s on the same page regarding “why we’re here and how we’re going to achieve it.”

When a meeting chair or facilitator states “We’re here to discuss XYZ” the ‘content’ of the discussion is presumed to be understood, but the intent may be ambiguous, or vice versa. It’s not unusual for a group to get together, start discussing a topic and, after 30 minutes, realise that 50% of the participants are arguing or defending a viewpoint that is only tangentially related to the current topic. This happens because individuals enter a meeting with different assumptions about the purpose. The confusion becomes further compounded if the meeting ‘process’ is not discussed or is nonexistent.

Typical purposes for hold a meeting include:
- Discussion forum for internal or external clients
- Planning and development of a project
- Progress of a project
- Range of business items
- Setting of enterprise or team goals.

New technology provides several alternatives to the conventional face-to-face meeting around a table, for example phone and video-conferencing, increasingly mobile and web-based. These ‘virtual meeting’ methods save time and money, but given the advantages of physical face-to-face communications there will always be a trade-off between the efficiencies of ‘virtual meetings’ (phone and video-conferencing notably) and the imperfections of remote communications methods (notably the inability to convey body language effectively via video conferencing, and the inability to convey body language and facial expressions by phone communications).

Accordingly, choose meeting methods that are appropriate for the situation. Explore other options such as telephone conferencing and video conferencing before deciding that a physical meeting is required, and decide what sort of meeting is appropriate for the situation. Subject to obvious adaptations and restrictions, the main principles of running physical face-to-face meetings apply to running virtual meetings.

Physical face-to-face meetings are the most effective type of meetings for conveying feelings and meanings. Therefore it is not sensible or fair to hold a virtual (phone or video-conferencing) meeting about a very serious matter. Understand that meaning and feelings can be lost or confused when people are not physically sitting in the same room as each other. Trying to save time and money by holding virtual meetings for serious matters is often a false economy for the organisation, and can actually be very unfair to staff if the matter significantly affects their personal futures or well-being.
A meeting provides a special opportunity to achieve organisational outcomes, and also to help the attendees in a variety of ways, so approach all meetings keeping in mind these two different mutually supporting aims.

The aim and test of a well run meeting is that whatever the subject, people feel afterwards that it took care of their needs, as well as the items on the agenda.

Your choice of structure and style in running an effective meeting is hugely dependent on several factors:

- **The situation** (circumstances, mood, atmosphere, background, etc)
- **The organisational context** (the implications and needs of the business or project or organisation)
- **The team, or the meeting delegates** (the needs and interests of those attending)
- **You yourself** (your own role, confidence, experience, your personal aims, etc)
- **Your position and relationship** with the team
- **The aims** of the meeting.

Some typical reasons for meeting are:

- **Managing a project**: Projects tend to require meetings at various stages: at the beginning, as the project plan is coming together, and at regular intervals while the work is being done. Toward the end of the project, depending on its size, daily meetings could be necessary.

- **Managing people**: Many bosses call weekly staff meetings in addition to weekly one-on-one meetings with their direct reports. These standing meetings provide a chance to review the work accomplished in the previous week and look ahead to what will be accomplished in the coming week. Weekly one-on-one meetings also give the chance to provide feedback outside the performance review process.

- **Managing a client**: Many types of companies, especially professional services firms, make presentations to clients - sales presentations, start-up meetings, interim status meetings, and final presentations. Ongoing relationships also typically involve periodic meetings.

Typical meeting styles include:

- **Standing meeting**: A regularly scheduled appointment, such as a weekly one-on-one with a boss or a department; or a project meeting taking place at intervals until the project is over. Since these meetings recur, their format and agenda become relatively well established. Although it's important to hold these meetings at routine intervals for convenience and consistency, at times they can be rescheduled.

- **Topical meeting**: A gathering called to discuss one subject, such as a work issue or a task related to a project.
- **Presentation:** A highly structured meeting where one or more people speak and a moderator leads the proceedings. The purpose is usually to inform. Attendees may have an opportunity to ask questions, but typically their participation is limited.

- **Conference:** A highly structured, moderated meeting, like a presentation, where various participants contribute following a fixed agenda.

- **Emergency meeting:** A meeting called to address a crisis, whether internal or external. Such meetings are often arranged with very little notice, but attendance is mandatory. If the emergency meeting conflicts with another appointment, the emergency meeting typically takes precedence.

- **Seminar:** A structured meeting with an educational purpose. Seminars are usually led by people with expertise in the subject matter.

### Who Should Participate?

The decision about who is to attend depends on what you want to accomplish in the meeting. This may seem too obvious to state, but it’s surprising how many meetings occur without the right people there. Don’t depend on your own judgment about who should come. Ask several other people for their opinion as well.

Stop for a minute to consider the hourly cost to your organisation of the people attending your meeting. You’ll realise that calling a meeting is expensive, so it’s important to ensure that every person attending and every minute of your meeting adds value. So don’t invite people who won’t participate but will simply report back to their boss or team (sending a copy of the minutes will be a more effective way of achieving this). Equally, don’t use meetings to tell people things that could be communicated just as effectively by email or memo.

Invite only those directly involved in the issues being discussed. Meetings can fail because too many or too few participants attend. If a meeting is too large, for example, discussion may be superficial and it may take twice as long to make a decision than you originally thought. If all attendees will be affected by decisions, they’ll be more task-oriented and less distracted by trivial issues.

As a general rule, planning can be accomplished by a sub-group within an organisation, not everyone has to participate. In addition to diversity of experience, planning teams should encompass diversity of thinking styles. The world sometimes seems to be sharply divided into two types of people big picture visionaries, and practical nuts-and-bolts people. Planning teams require both types. The big picture folks have difficulty reaching closure and won’t be able to convert a vision to an action plan. Developing step-by-step procedures is what the nuts-and-bolts types like doing best.

Consider inviting representatives from other departments to your own department meetings - if relationships are not great they will often appreciate being asked, and it will help their understanding of your issues, and your understanding of theirs.
Having outside guests from internal and external suppliers helps build relationships and strengthen the chain of supply, and they can often also shed new light on difficult issues too. Use your discretion though - certain sensitive issues should obviously not be aired with ‘outsiders’ present.

Avoid and resist senior managers and directors attending your meetings unless you can be sure that their presence will be positive, and certainly not intimidating. Senior people are often quick to criticise and pressurise without knowing the facts, which can damage team relationships, morale, motivation and trust.

**Contacting the Participants**

Your organisation may have standard procedures for notices of meetings. If so, always follow the methods. If these are not available, remember to allow plenty of time for participants to plan their time and consider the pre-reading.

- **Send an e-mail stating there will be a meeting, the goal of the meeting as well as the administrative details such as when and where it will be.** Ask those invited to accept or decline the meeting. Make it clear that once they have accepted the meeting, they are expected to attend.

- **Ask participants requesting an agenda item to contact you** no less than two days before the meeting with their request and the amount of time they will need to present it.

- **Once all of the agenda requests have been submitted to you summarise them** in a table format with the headings Agenda Item, Presenter and Time. It's your responsibility to ensure that each agenda item is directly related to the goals of this particular meeting. If an inappropriate request is made, suggest that person send an e-mail or memo instead or recommend that this agenda item be discussed in another meeting. Also, you must be realistic in the amount of time you allocate to each presenter. Don't cram an unrealistic number of agenda items into an hour meeting. When people accept an hour meeting, they expect to be finished in an hour. When meetings go over time, people generally tend to get uneasy. It's better to schedule 50 minutes of discussion into an hour time slot. This way you have 10 minutes to spare and if you get done a little early, people will be pleased.

- **Send the agenda to all the meeting participants the day before the meeting** with a reminder of the meeting goals, location, time and duration. At this time, ask the presenters if they are happy with the order in which they will be speaking and the amount of time they have been allocated.
Meeting Arrangements

Having established the purpose and structure of your meeting, you must now either make or confirm the arrangements to ensure that it flows smoothly and has the right well-prepared participants thereby increasing efficiency.

Before you do anything else, determine your budget. Pinning down limits early in the planning process helps other variables fall into place - all of which depend on resources available.

Ideally the venue should:

- Provide meeting areas and accommodation in the same building.
- Be close to transport, city shops, parks or some natural resort for enjoyment of leisure time.
- Be close to cheaper and alternative accommodation.
- Contain a suitable area for any exhibitions in close proximity to the main lecture hall and be soundproofed. It should be large enough to have coffee breaks and luncheons in the exhibition area.
- Provide in-house audio-visual facilities to be used in conjunction with an outside contractor if necessary have a registration and information area where the meeting secretariat can be established.
- Have an area for speakers’ audiovisual preparation.
- Have a functions manager, who is the immediate venue contact before and during the meeting.
- Provide adequate security for the meeting, secretariat and guests.
- **Pre-meeting Documentation:** What do participants need to read and consider before the meeting? What is the timeframe for despatch?

It’s not a bad idea to leave a little room in your budget for those inevitable unforeseen expenses that pop up along the way.

For smaller meetings, some of the selection criteria above may not apply.
Pre-Reading and Meeting Papers

A comprehensive agenda will save time and increase productivity in the meeting. One of the key components is the inclusion of supporting information. Too many meetings involve a group review of relevant information. It's much quicker and easier to ask participants to review this information prior to the meeting. That way, the meeting itself can be used to resolve problems and make decisions. And that should be the goal of every meeting.

Documentation that will help you achieve the meeting goals can include reports; data and charts such as competitive information, sales month-to-date, and production plans; Microsoft PowerPoint slides that illustrate key discussion points; and minutes, notes and follow-up from earlier or related meetings and projects, correspondence and any other documents that need time to consider, clarify or research. Pre-work distributed in a timely manner, with the serious expectation that attendees will read the pre-work before the meeting, helps ensure meeting success.

Choosing and meeting an appropriate timeline for despatch is challenging. If it is sent too early, it may be lost or forgotten; too late and it may not be received or there may be insufficient time for reading.

It is doubtful if there is a general ‘rule of thumb’ to time the despatch of documents. However, consider the quantity, the degree of detail, what outcomes you expect to achieve by sending this material out in the first place.

Typical considerations would include:

- Contractual obligations
- Formal timeframe set by the organisation
- Informal timeframe set by the administrative organiser
- Project time lines
- Statutory requirements (e.g. For annual general meetings)
- Timeframes decided by participants.

Send the documents by a method that will ensure their arrival in the time intended by you. This may be delivery by hand, post courier or express delivery in some cases. Be mindful of your budget, but also considerate of the time of the recipients.
Activity One
This Activity is designed to give you an appreciation of time and planning. Your Facilitator will provide the instructions.
Key Points Section 1

- A well-prepared and organised agenda is an important tool for helping groups hold orderly, efficient meetings.
- Choose meeting methods that are appropriate for the situation.
- Explore other options such as telephone conferencing and video conferencing before deciding that a physical meeting is required, and decide what sort of meeting is appropriate for the situation.
- Meeting Styles include:
  - Standing meeting
  - Topical meeting
  - Presentation
  - Conference
  - Emergency meeting
  - Seminar.
- Don’t invite people who won’t participate but will simply report back to their boss or team.
- Make or confirm the arrangements to ensure that it flows smoothly.
  - Budget
  - Transport
  - Accommodation
  - Choosing a Date
  - Location
  - Meeting Equipment
  - Catering
  - Pre-meeting Documentation.
- One of the key components of an agenda is the inclusion of supporting information.
- Send the documents by a method that will ensure their arrival in the time intended by you.
### Section 1 - ‘True’ or ‘False’ Quiz

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