

**IDEAS ON HOW TO RUN A MEETING**  
**excerpted from HOW TO MAKE MEETINGS WORK**  
**by Michael Doyle & David Straus**  
**THERE ARE 5 BASIC CRITERIA FOR A GOOD MEETING:**

1. There must be a common focus on content (agree on **WHAT** you are going to do)
2. There must be a common focus on process (agree on **HOW** to get along)
3. Someone is responsible to keep discussion open and moving and balanced
4. Someone is responsible for protecting people from personal attack
5. All people need to agree and be clear in their role and responsibility

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Additional ideas

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1. Elect a **FACILITATOR**. This is a different person than the regular manager or chairperson your organization. You may have a different **FACILITATOR** for each meeting, this way everybody who wants to learn how can get the chance. The **FACILITATORS** job is to keep the meeting on track. They are a gate-keeper; someone who sticks to the agenda, avoids irrelevant side-tracking, and maintains the focus on the purpose of the meeting. The purpose of a working meeting is to accomplish **TASKS--NOT TO DO ENCOUNTER OR SENSITIVITY CONFRONTATIONS**. When all are treated with decency, respect, and politeness, and their ideas are heard, then the task accomplishment is effective and efficient. The **FACILITATOR** is neutral and does not take sides, but keeps the meeting going with an even hand and protects group members and their ideas from being attacked.
2. Elect a **RECORDER**. This person will keep notes/minutes and thereby keep a "group memory" of the meeting. This is different from "individual memory" in that the group is meeting **TOGETHER** as a **TEAM** to accomplish specific tasks. The recorder helps the group maintain its focus on its goals, and methods of getting there. Recording what the group does, on a wall sheet(s) allows the group members to see whether the group process is an accurate reflection of what the group members agreed upon to do in the agenda (**THE TASKS**).
3. In organizations where some tasks are dictated by administration or by law, those tasks are not negotiable. Your choice is whether you will do them with good will or protracted complaints. Other Tasks can be accomplished in a win/win atmosphere. "**CONSENSUS**" **DOESN'T MEAN COMPROMISE**. When everybody has had a chance to offer ideas and discuss them, there is the opportunity for the group as a whole to come to agreement about the best course for the group.
4. **GROUP MEMBERS** will help the facilitator remain neutral. They will keep an eye on the wall charts for accuracy of recording. They will volunteer ideas and comments. They will listen carefully to others. They will raise counter-points without being negative or defensive. They will avoid routine sub-grouping and sitting with the same people. This allows a more creative mix at meetings.
5. **HOW THE BOSS STAYS BOSS** You can't be neutral, so don't try. Some things you have to do by law or administration. The group members have rights and feelings about **HOW** things are run and what they **CAN** and **SHOULD** control. Determine how much or which decisions are the right of the group and which are yours. Clarity helps everybody. Cooperative work takes time. Don't plan too little time for group process. "**DO IT DAMM IT**" is fast but it always has a price to pay.



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING**  
**YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**