ICOM 5047: Computer Engineering Design

Workshop: Effective Meetings
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Meetings

- Definition: People coming together for the purpose of resolving problems or making decisions
  - Essential element in business
  - Cost time and money
  - How many meetings really serve a useful purpose?
    - Hold them only when necessary
Know your aims

- Be clear about the purpose of a meeting
- If issue can be resolved without a meeting, cancel the meeting
- Consider what makes a meeting successful or not
- Consider what would happen if the meeting were not held
Purpose of a Meeting

- Dealing with information
  - Ex. Giving or receiving reports, issuing instructions, announcing or explaining procedural change

- Resolving problems
  - Ex. Handling grievances

- Making decisions
  - Ex. Choosing between options, committing to a course of action

- Encouraging ideas
  - Generate creative solutions
Four Disciplines of Execution

- Focus on the wildly important
  - WIG – Wildly Important Goals
- Create a compelling Scoreboard
  - How to measure success
- Translate lofty goals into specific actions
- Hold each other accountable all of the time
The power to focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Goals</th>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>4-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals achieved with excellence</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Execution Gap

- **Clarity** – not knowing clearly the goals and priorities of the team or organization
- **Commitment** – not buying into the goals
- **Translation** – not knowing what they need to do to help the team or organization achieve its goals
- **Enabling** – not having the proper structure, systems or freedom to do their jobs well
- **Synergy** – not getting along or work together
- **Accountability** – not holding each other accountable
Hold each other accountable

- All the time
- Knowing that others are counting on you raises your level of the commitment
- Maintaining commitment to the goal requires frequent team engagement and accountability
Getting commitment to the goal

- Scale of commitment

Rebellion  Malicious Obedience  Willing Compliance  Cheerful Cooperation  Heart-Felt Commitment  Creative Excitement
Are your staff meetings effective?

Which is true?

- Our meetings revolve around our wildly important goals
- Meetings are held regularly and often
- There is clear accountability and follow-through
- Successes are celebrated
- People report struggles and failures openly
- There is robust brainstorming and problem solving
- People commit to helping each other
- People leave energized
Staff Meetings

Clear the Path

Wildly Important Goals

Finding Third Alternatives

Triage Reporting
Staff Meetings

- Clear the Path
- Wildly Important Goals
- Finding Third Alternatives
- Triage Reporting
Wildly Important Goals

- Focus intensively on WIGs
  - Not talk about everything under the sun
- Real work gets done
  - Can’t wait for this meeting to end so you can get back to work
- For the team
  - Not for the manager
Wildly Important Goals

- **Language**
  - The purpose of this meeting is to move our top goals forward.
  - Tell me how what we’re talking about will help us move the goal forward.
  - What are the few things we must accomplish in this meeting today to move our wildly important goals forward?
Staff Meetings

- Clear the Path
- Wildly Important Goals
- Finding Third Alternatives
- Triage Reporting
Triage Reporting

- Quick reporting of vital few issues
  - Not “Death March” around the room where people feel pressure to talk while everyone else checks out
- Reviewing your scoreboard
  - How if no measures of progress
- Follow-up
  - Don’t do no follow-up
- Mutual accountability
  - No: Only managers hold people accountable
- People openly report struggles and failures
  - Vs People hide their struggles and failures
- Celebrations of successes
  - Focusing only on problems
Triage reporting

- Let’s check out our scoreboard to see how we’re doing
- Here are my key results for the week
- What were our successes?
- I ran into some problems, and here’s what I am planning to do about them
- I don’t have anything I need to share with the entire group
- Thank you. Next?
Staff Meetings

Clear the Path

Wildly Important Goals

Finding Third Alternatives

Triage Reporting
Finding Third Alternatives

- Energetic problem solving
  - Not all talk, no action
- New and better ideas are created
  \(1+1=3, 1+1=10, 1+1=100, 1+1 = \text{more}\)
  - Not no time or environment for creative dialogue
- Wisdom of the group
  - No “the lone genius”
Finding the third alternative

- Let’s generate as many ideas as possible and then narrow down our choices.
- Can we schedule time over the next few days to get this solved?
- What do we need to get that done?
- I would like to take some time right now to focus on this one issue.
Clear the path

- A stroke of the pen for me eliminates hours of work for you
  - Getting stuck because barriers you cannot get over by yourself

- We are in this together
  - Not you are on your own

- Admitting you need help and asking for it
  - Not being afraid to admit when you need help
Clearing the path

- How can I clear the path for you?
- I am struggling with this issue and need some help
- I know that person. I will give her a call.
- Who already knows something about this?
- What do you need to get that done?
Listening to Others

- Good listeners look attentive
- Annoying if participants are whispering
- Respecting others
  - Personal or professional prejudices
- Tailor your speech
  - Pay attention to your speech
- Avoid negative body language
Meetings

- **With whom?**
  - Full team
  - Subgroup
  - One on one

- **How often?**
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Monthly

- **How and where?**
  - Face to face
  - Conference call
  - Email?
Be prepared for a meeting

- Agenda
- Determine your purpose
- Set your goals
- Decide on your methods
- Allocate time
- Who should meet?
- When and where?
- Prepare materials
Conducting the meeting

- Follow the agenda
- Set and maintain appropriate pace
- Share information
- Conduct discussion
- Manage participation
- Get a decision
- Plan action and make assignments
Closing the meeting and follow up

- Summarize main points, decisions, actions, and assignments
- Sketch agenda for next meeting
- Evaluate meeting
- Write and distribute minutes
  - Minutes should contain date, people involved in the meeting, important points, decisions, who said what
## Sample Meeting – Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow-up action</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Next meeting</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Date, time, place (if it changes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A description of any action that someone committed to work on or complete before the next meeting

| The person or group who committed to the action | Date and time for completion or ASAP, soon, or next week. |

Taken from Deane Gradous, Twin Cities consultant, http://www.managementhelp.org/writing/minutes.htm
Sample Meeting –Minutes

- **Present**
  - Axxxx
  - Bxxxx
  - Cxxx (Chair)
  - Dxxxx
  - Exxxx
  - *Absent

- **Agenda**
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxx
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxx

- **Discussion, decisions, assignments**
  - **First agenda item.** Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxx
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxx
  - **Second agenda item.** Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxx
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxx
  - **Additional items.** Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxx
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxx

- **Tentative agenda for the next meeting**
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxx
  - Xxx xxxxx xxxxx

- **Call** (insert your name and number) or email with additions or corrections to these minutes.

Taken from Deane Gradous, Twin Cities consultant, http://www.managementhelp.org/writing/minutes.htm
Minutes

- Distribute minutes
- Approve minutes
- Verify accuracy
- Action items
  - What to do after meeting
  - Set up time for next meeting
Practicalities

- Check that locality is available
- Do we need visual aids? Board?
- Writing! Take notes.
- Breaks. Refreshments?
- Punctuality
References

- Stephen Covey, Jennifer Colosimo, *4 Disciplines of Execution*, Franklin Covey, 2004.
Questions?