



# HOW TO STRUCTURE EFFECTIVE MEETINGS AND HOW TO WRITE A MEETING AGENDA

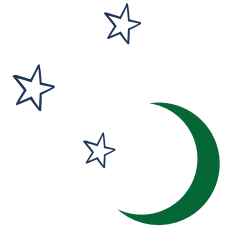
---

## STEP 1:

### HAVE A PURPOSE

#### Why are we meeting?

Some meetings are about networking with other people and others are about reporting on progress; some are to present information and still others are for discussing and deciding on something. Most meetings will be a combination of these things. What is your reason for meeting?



#### What do we need to accomplish?

At the end of the meeting, what will be different than before the meeting? For example:

- By the end of the meeting, we need a decision on whether to proceed with X project. Or ...
- We need 3 strong ideas on how to advertise a new service. Or ...
- To educate the Executive Committee on new risks that the organization could be facing.

## STEP 2:

### CREATE AN AGENDA

#### What is an agenda?

An agenda is a list of topics or items to be covered in the meeting.

#### List of topics

When writing an agenda, list all the topics that must be covered and items that need to be accomplished to achieve the purpose and goals of the meeting

#### Report out on action items

An action item is a task that someone volunteered to do. When meeting with volunteers, it is essential to provide time for them to update the group on their progress on completing action items they agreed to accomplish at the last meeting. This is very important for two reasons:

- Coordination: The work of one member usually impacts the work of the group.
- Accountability: If a volunteer completes a task, it will be easier to trust them to take on other tasks in the future.

#### Review new action items

Conclude each meeting agenda with a review of new action items or new tasks that volunteers agreed to accomplish by the next meeting. This is done to keep everyone on the same page about who is responsible for what.

## STEP 3:

### OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING MEETING AGENDAS

#### Order of topics

Does it make sense to talk about one topic before another?

#### Method of discussion

Think about how each topic should be discussed. There are many options:

- Each meeting member could report out to the group.
- The group could be divided into smaller groups for discussion. After 10- minutes, each reports back to the larger group on what they learned.
- The meeting facilitator could lead the group in a decision-making exercise. For example, a SWOT Analysis, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a decision are discussed.

#### Time

Think about the time available to the group and how much time should be allowed for each topic.

#### Length of agenda

It is best to keep written agendas short and to the point. They are really just outlines of the meetings, and don't need to include a lot of detail. A good agenda will be one page long or shorter.

