Masterfull Meetings

In almost any type of job you will have to participate in or organize meetings with colleagues, suppliers and employees. Your approach to the planning, preparation and execution of a meeting will determine how much you can achieve from it. Whether you are taking part in a meeting at someone else's request or organising one for strategic reasons, you should always plan out your objectives.

In any meeting that you will participate in you should think about what kind of impression you are making on the other participants and use it as an opportunity to make a good one! Therefore your communication has to be at its best. You need to be **clear and concise**, motivational and positive. You need to be capable of **asking questions**, **probing for more information** but always sticking to the point. You need to **structure your message** carefully and **resume each point** clearly. You need to find the words to **politely direct** other participants to stick to the agenda and to be concise themselves. Above all you have to think carefully about whom you are talking to, through what medium and take cultural differences and other people's interests and objectives into consideration. Remember that people are listening from different perspectives and different backgrounds and this creates a barrier to understanding. This is why it's even more important to be **clear and well structured** and never ambiguous when you are in an international meeting.

At the end of a meeting that you organize you will need to send minutes to all participants to resume what was said. After any meeting you participate in you should ask yourself if you have achieved your objectives. If not then you might need to **follow up with some e-mails** or suggest a new meeting.

If people go off the subject during the meeting you need to be able to **remind them** of the **timing** and **propose a follow up** discussion with them in order to deal with any remaining questions or points raised which were not on the agenda.



Discussion Questions

1. How many meetings do you participate in each week?
2. How many of them are in English?
3. What different types of people do you meet with?
4. Do you always prepare?
5. Do you think people usually stick to the point?
6. What annoys you about meetings?
7. What advice would you give to someone new to your company about meetings?
8. Do you dare to speak up in meetings in general in French, and in English?
9. What makes a good meeting for you?
10. What would you like to learn in English to help you with meetings?

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Expressions to Help you in Meetings:

To be Clear and Concise

You need to use sequencers and linking words to structure each point. You must use short sentences.

To resume a point

- So, in brief…
- So: to sum up the main points.
- To resume…
- Basically then…
- Essentially then…
- What I am saying is..
- All in all…

Politely tell others to stick to the agenda



- To go back to what I was saying…
- I'd just like to get back to the agenda now if you don't mind.
- I think we could deal with those points in another meeting… for now let's stick to the agenda.
- Let's focus on…

Remind people of the timing

- I'm afraid we are on a tight schedule here…
- Sorry but time is running out, I hope you don't mind if we stick to…
- I'm afraid we are a bit short of time, could we deal with that at a later date?
- I feel it's important to stay focussed on the matter in hand. Let's see if we can find time for that at the end of today's meeting.
- I think we will have to move to the next point on the agenda now as we are limited in time.

To ask a Question

- Would you mind if I asked…
- Could I just ask..
- Excuse me for interrupting but I would just like to ask if…
- I'd just like to point out…
- Could I ask you to develop on that last point a bit…
- Excuse me, I'd like to know if…
- Could I ask you if…
- Could you tell me a little more about…
- I'm not sure if I understood that last point.

Practice

1/ Using the expressions; present your job and latest work project to the class/teacher. At the end invite them to ask you questions about your presentation.

2/ Create an agenda for a meeting on these subjects and then run the meeting:

1. *Your head office has decided that from now on everyone has to work from home. You need to meet to discuss the practicalities and organization of this plan.*

2. *You meet with your colleagues to discus the possibility of having all future meetings at breakfast time with donuts, orange juice and coffee. Or after work,with aperitifs. You need to reach a decision between the two options.*