



FIVE EXCELLENT THINGS TO DO AFTER VIRTUAL MEETINGS

IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW WELL A virtual meeting is run or how much it saves on travel expenses if its desired outcome is not achieved in a timely manner. Often meetings miss the mark because action items are not complete, and expected deliverables do not meet deadlines. To prevent a waste of labour dollars and valuable company time, the meeting leader must take the responsibility for follow-up. To ensure success, a virtual meeting leader should incorporate these five things into their post-meeting responsibilities.

1. Survey the attendees immediately to improve future meetings.

The survey can be a quick email poll of key questions with a choice of three or four answers, sent within an hour of the meeting's end. Why do this survey? If you are testing a virtual meeting tool for team use, a short survey to meeting members will provide valuable feedback, which can help the organization decide if the tool is worth purchasing or if they need to continue looking for a tool with additional features or one that is easier to use. If the tool is already the company standard, then asking different types of questions can help the meeting leader become better at facilitating future virtual meetings.

2. Send meeting minutes or a web link to minutes within 24 hours of meeting end.

Make sure everyone's action items are included in the minutes as this will be the first thing attendees will look for. Action items

should be listed using the 3Ws: Who will do it; What do they need to do; and When should it be done by. Also include a reminder with date and time of the next meeting if there is to be one, so everyone can verify they have it on their schedule. The meeting call-in data does not have to be in the minutes because it should be sent to desired participants a day or two before the actual meeting.

3. Use a single location for all group data related to ongoing projects or team work.

This single location can be a secured server file, a team blog, or an internal forum used to record information that members of the group can review at any time between meetings. This single location can also be handy for storing all links to team documents on a company server or website. Do not put passwords in these locations no matter how secure the site is expected to be.

4. Send a reminder of action items and any other required information a few days before the next meeting.

This allows everyone time to complete their actions and report on them to the meeting leader before the next meeting, which means less time has to be spent reviewing actions during the virtual meeting. If anyone is having problems meeting their due dates, this will give them the opportunity to discuss resources and other options with the team leader. Any new documents or presentation materials can also be given for advanced preview via email attachment or by providing a link for online review and/or download.

5. Plan the next meeting to be even better than the last.

The meeting leader can make each meeting better by using what is learned from prior meetings. The leader can also review documentation of the tool used for holding virtual meetings to discover any helpful features that are not being used, such as in-meeting polling, slide shows, video or webcam options, and recording information or making changes on-screen. Both the meeting leader and team members may want to research articles and tips to facilitate better, encourage more meeting participation, and develop meeting behaviour guidelines.

Understanding and following these five suggestions should help meeting leaders have more effective virtual meetings, because the leader is responsible for more than just what goes on in the meeting. To be truly successful, most meetings will extend to work outside the meeting start and stop times. Therefore, the meeting leader must take the initiative for ensuring resources and be willing to help the meeting members understand their responsibilities for future virtual meeting success.

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