

Thriving Workplace

Planning Successful Meetings

Observations

Within many organisations, people at all levels behave as though planning and preparing for a useful meeting is a matter of simply deciding three matters: the meeting topic, the participants and its venue. At meetings, they behave as though effectiveness involves competing for speaking rights (and thereby allowing only a minority to contribute usefully), tossing ideas around, arguing about them under the misconception that they are “problem-solving”, “brainstorming” and “reaching consensus”, and then somehow prioritising them as a lightly-sketched list of actions. Someone says, “*Sounds like a plan*”; someone says, “*Let’s do it.*” Many unspoken and unsafe assumptions are made. Little, if anything, is accurately documented or methodically followed-through.

Although this sort of improvisation sometimes succeeds, its progress is more often marked by the eventual need to revisit the issues from scratch or by having to undo things already done because unwisely, they were not part of a well-considered, well-supported plan arising from a methodical planning process involving fit-for-purpose practices.

The principal distinction between common practice and what is *good sense* in this matter, is the difference between hoping for improvisation to provide success and methodically planning for success.

Even with better efforts, planning initiatives frequently fail because:

- Requirements, intentions, priorities, desired processes (methodology, means) and intended outcomes are so indistinct as to make progress monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness impossible.
- Processes used within or as part of a planning process for problem-solving, decision-making, the generation of ideas and creativity, and for resolving differences, deflect attention from the important issues.
- Those likely to be most affected by plans are left out of testing, monitoring, refining and evaluating them.
- Agenda of planning meetings is mistaken for the purpose of those meetings. Differing perceptions of purpose and (therefore) the means for achieving it create inefficiencies and unhelpful undercurrents of tension.

Assumptions

1. Clarity of purpose and foresight about all that it will take to realise a plan for a successful meeting, are more likely to produce desired outcomes than unclarity, ad-libbing or leaving things to chance.
2. *Purpose* is the primary reference-point for all organisation, team or group efforts. The activities of an organisation, group, team or meeting are attended to in order to achieve purpose; they constitute current agenda or strategy. *Agenda* is not *purpose*.

3. When a meeting (or any collaborative venture) proceeds with a vague, unclear or misunderstood statement of purpose or with one capable of differing interpretations, every decision about agenda or strategy is flawed in the eyes of those for whom it represents a misperception of purpose. Whether or not what is done is relevant, important, right, or whether where, when and how it is approached it is appropriate, are matters always open to uncertainty, confusion or irresolvable argument.
4. A balance of attention to both *task* and *process* increases the likelihood that methodology for meetings is fit for purpose.
5. A balance of attention to achieving *primary task or purpose* and developing a group's individual and collective capacity for the *primary task or purpose* increases the likelihood of success in ways which benefit the people involved, and ultimately the organisation.
6. The degree and quality of others' commitment to plans depends largely upon the degree and quality of their involvement in the planning process.
7. Periodic monitoring of progress and refinement if necessary at pre-determined intervals minimises divergence from the ideal.
8. Thorough evaluation of outcomes at the (pre-determined) end of the time-span covered by the plan, contributes to continual improvement, especially by learning from experience.
9. Formal "parliamentary rules" for meetings are rarely appropriate for everyday meetings designed to progress an organisation's business, as they tend to promote adversarial, competitive positions and inhibit discussion, teamwork, collaboration and widely-supported outcomes.
10. However, "messy democracy" or the "tyranny of structurelessness" at meetings produces negative outcomes equal to or worse than the "tyranny of structure". Both should be avoided.

Reference-Points

Meeting: A formal or semi-formal occasion at which people intentionally come into association to collectively achieve some purpose relevant to their interests or business.

Management: The methodical planning, direction and measurement of desired performance.

Meeting Process: The methods, means, techniques, procedures and practices used to achieve the intentions of a meeting.

Planning: The methodical arrangement and sequencing (or *mapping*) of all the foreseeable activities, procedures and milestones necessary to achieve a particular purpose and its intended effects, monitor progress towards them and evaluate their achievement.

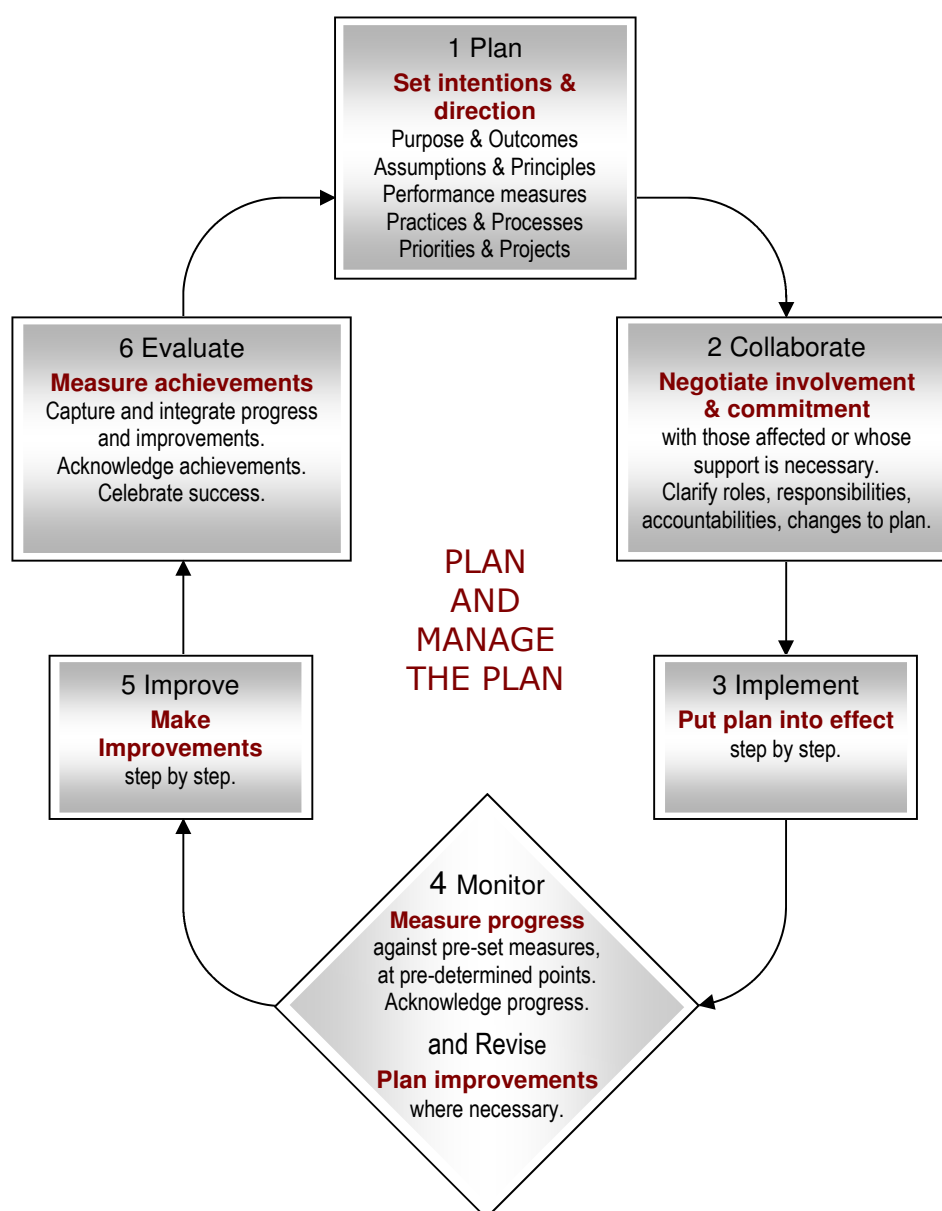
Plan-and-Manage-the-Plan: Shorthand for the sequence of steps outlined in the following graphic, page 3.

Planning the Plan

Planning is the methodical arrangement and sequencing (or *mapping*) of all the foreseeable activities, procedures and milestones necessary to achieve a particular purpose and its intended effects, monitor progress towards them and evaluate their achievement.

Management is the methodical planning, direction and measurement of desired performance.

The sequence of broad steps in a generic *good sense*, methodical **planning-and-plan-management process** can be summarised in this way:



The process can be applied to most management tasks and projects, including the management of meetings, as the following discussion (and further articles in this section of our Subscriber Library) illustrates.

Establishing Purpose and Direction

The first stage of planning-and-managing-the-plan, involves setting out the requirement (what we want), indicators of its achievement (how we will know when we've got it), devising strategy for success (broad targets broken into small steps arranged sequentially), and milestones of progress that can be used to monitor progress along the way. The first step is to clarify purpose.

A meeting's purpose should always be described in ways that enable every participant and intending participant to clearly understand the intentions and their implications.

Any uncertainty, confusion, disagreement or unsafe assumptions about purpose will eventually emerge as dysfunction.

When a meeting proceeds with a vague, unclear or misunderstood statement of purpose or with one capable of differing interpretations, every decision about agenda or strategy is flawed in the eyes of those for whom it represents a misperception of purpose. Whether or not what is done is relevant, important, right, or whether where, when and how it is approached it is appropriate, are matters always open to uncertainty, confusion or irresolvable argument.

Section meetings, Marketing meetings, Team meetings, Board (Committee, General, Management or Executive) meetings, the Monday Staff Meeting, or the Weekly Work-in-Progress Meeting are meaningless terms that do not satisfy the need for clarity.

Nor do *Check-In, Progress, Catch-Up or Progress Review* meetings. In the last mentioned, *reviewing progress* is an agenda item. Purpose is found or can be eventually determined by asking, of agenda, "So that what . . . ?" The question may need to be asked a number of times, of each successive answer, before purpose becomes clear.

If you are asked to attend a meeting with an unclear purpose (e.g., *To . . . Toss some ideas around, Go over the budget, Talk about the project, See where we're up to, Coordinate our activities*, etc), ask questions to find the real purpose, (e.g., *What's the reason for this? What do you want to achieve? What for? In order to what . . . ?*) before committing yourself or forming conclusions about what will be appropriate preparation and agenda items: If you call the meeting, responsibility for establishing and advising clarity of purpose is yours.

The statement of purpose for the meetings of an ongoing project group¹ or team² may be conveniently assigned a shorthand to identify them, (e.g., meetings of the *Delta 5 Project Team* or the *Succession Planning Project*). However, the distinct purpose of each separate meeting should be identified and clearly stated each time. For example (in the case of a project's meetings):

- *To identify emerging problems impacting on the project's intended schedule.*
- *To understand the implications for our collective commitment to the scheme, of each individual's current progress, and to assess the need for any necessary adjustments to the project plan.*

"90% of most executives' working days are occupied by meetings with at least one other person. Most other managers spend between 35% and 70% of their time at meetings.

[. . . Most] are doomed to failure because their purpose has not been accurately identified, the participants aren't sure where they're heading, they are not conducted properly, and their results aren't measured."

[Terry Robins-Jones, University of South Australia]

Appropriate agenda and processes can then be derived from those statements.

¹ For example, a project whose purpose is to "Make it as easy as possible for potential clients to access and use our services."

² For example, a team's meeting purpose might be, to "Review and refine the team development plan."

Do you attend regular *Team* meetings? *Marketing, Business, or Management* meetings? What's their intended purpose?

Do all participants share the same understanding of that purpose? How do you know?

I'm often asked to meet prospective clients to "See if you've got anything to offer us", "Discuss a few current issues and concerns", "Talk about some training ideas", "Sort out our problems", "Help us to run better meetings" or "Do some teamwork for us." Naturally, my first response is to indicate interest and potential willingness but I follow it up immediately with questions to help clarify their issues, intentions and needs.

In this step I'm essentially using my own problem-clarification process and an assumption that the *presenting problem* is almost never the real problem. I work hard to be sensitive to individuals' unfamiliarity with the process: they're more comfortable than I am with unconstructive vagueness, untested assumptions and problems disguised as solutions, e.g., *The problem is, we need more teamwork*; or as the absence of solutions or ideal states, e.g., *Our meetings are not effective*.

So I ask, *What has happened to bring you to this point? What issues are you hoping this will address? How did they come about?* and other, similar open questions until I have clarified sufficient information to offer some paraphrasing: *[Specific events] have happened and you'd like my response and insights into [these] and to hear and consider my approach to dealing with them. . ? And you're OK with my inquiring into how these things came about . . ?* The meeting's purpose then becomes something like: *Clarify the client's challenges, their causes and the organisational culture to assess the likelihood of my services being useful.* Agenda and preparation for the meeting become apparent.

Intended Outcomes

List the intended outcomes derived from the meeting's purpose. They will indicate some of the process and other matters necessary to achieve those intentions. The conventional approach is less helpful: *To examine the issue of . . . To consider . . . Look at . . . Discuss . . . Review . . . Get a feeling for . . .* Better pointers of appropriate processes can be found in greater clarity, such as in this example:

Meeting Purpose: Clarify and resolve our concerns about servility and deference shown by members of the Board towards staff.

Outcomes: By the end of the meeting –

- Each participant will have clarified and expressed their views and feelings about the issues they have about this.
- They will understand the full range of different viewpoints represented in the group.
- We will have defined whatever problems are seen to exist, rank-ordered the priority of these, and targeted for further cause-and-effect inquiry those we are able to influence or resolve ourselves and be likely to produce a satisfying return on investment of effort.
- We will have understood the level of commitment to proceeding with the project, identified those who will work on it, and have established a finite project period.
- We will have agreed on a communication plan to report to others who are concerned with the matters but who did not attend.

Although it isn't always necessary to be so detailed or pedantic, specifying goals and key objectives in this way does bring about a clear sense of purpose and direction to the occasion. It also helps determine such factors as optimum scheduling, duration, venue, appropriate participants, best techniques, and logistics.

Often overlooked in the planning stage of meetings is ensuring that *human needs* outcomes are achieved. If *getting to know each other better* or *enjoying social contact with one another* or *increased group cohesion and teamwork* are among your intentions. Specify these intentions clearly, as this tends to indicate some of the necessary processes and administrative arrangements. What can you plan to give them the attention they deserve? They may, for instance, point to the desirability of providing refreshments on arrival, half-way through or on completion, arranging chairs in a circle or small groups rather than in rows, or certain exercises of trust such as providing processes for the safe divulging of personal information, to assist group bonding.

To Meet or Not to Meet?

Should you call a meeting? I'm tempted to recommend avoiding meetings if at all possible, a comment arising from many depressing experiences at dismal meetings I've attended over the years, painfully on a par with non-medicated tooth-extraction. One consideration is that in terms of time, energy, and money spent on salaries while people are attending a meeting, not attending to higher priorities, meetings can be very expensive. If they also cause frustration, confusion, resentment, cynicism or anger, they become extremely costly events.

Is a meeting an appropriate way to meet your purpose? Taking care to specify the purpose and desired outcomes may answer this question, but beware of conducting meetings just because meeting to get anything done is part of the organisational culture, as is often the case.

If it's merely information that is to be passed on, can the purpose be better served by circulating it in writing?³ If it really is necessary to meet to ensure that everyone understands the information at the same time and in the same way (good luck with that), keep the time down and levels of interest raised by minimising the full-forum method and by using mostly small group discussion instead.⁴

It is still my first instinct to find other ways of conducting business if possible, and to reduce the amount of time spent in meetings, unless –

- A meeting is the most efficient and effective way of dealing with the issues.
- The issues lend themselves (and few do not) to techniques that fully involve all the participants.
- A useful purpose will be served in addition to the meeting's business purpose, such as enhanced social contact, cohesion and synergy.
- The meeting is to be led by a capable facilitator of meetings.

I have encouraged many organisations to formulate and distribute in-house guidelines for determining when to hold or not to hold meetings. These, they report, have saved a great deal of time and other resources. On the other hand, I know of organisations in which meetings are routine approaches to almost all problems, issues, planning, projects and decisions. Some managers seem to believe that is how management is exercised. There, a great deal of time is wasted.

³ If people have stopped reading communications of this sort, do not assume that running meetings addresses the cause(s) of the problem; meetings may further compound the problem.

⁴ I find it significant that many people discussing "their" meetings, refer to participants as "attendees" or "the audience". This suggests a tendency to regard people as passive recipients of information or watchers of activity.

Once the purpose and desired outcomes have been specified, attention can be given to issues of optimum process, the best way of conducting the meeting) and to matters of logistics such as venue, duration, resources, number and identify of participants.

Who Should Attend?

Meetings are not a spectator sport, although judging by the numbers of truly uninvolved and passive or captive participants at many meetings, they often seem to be. Wastage can be reduced by inviting to attend only those who are directly involved in and affected by the topic under discussion and those with the best information or power to do something about it, the last-mentioned group not necessarily at the same meeting. As a useful guide, and depending on the stated purpose and desired outcomes, consider inviting those who are:

Doers: Those who will have to implement and apply the outcomes; they are often also the sufferers.

Sufferers: Those who are most affected by the issues, who can help clarify and define the challenges, problems and needs usefully, because they actually experience them.

Empowerers: Those with the power to *Make it happen*.

Experts: Specialists with detailed knowledge of specific aspects; often they are also sufferers. Remember that the real experts are often those who have to live with problems and apply solutions. For example if the meeting is to address difficulties experienced by customers getting telephone access to staff, the people likely to know most about the subject include the customers, the front-counter staff and those who have accurate data on the complaints, not just a manager or a telephone systems engineer.

What Group Size?

Given the topic, the objectives and the methods to be used, what is the optimum number of participants? The answer depends on the purpose, who should attend (see above), what outcomes are desired, the capacity of the venue, the skill of the facilitator and the time available. But there is no formula for accurately predicting the best group size; it's an art not a science. There's nothing wrong with very large groups if the time, skill and other resources available can combine to achieve the outcomes and produce an enjoyable or at least constructive occasion. (I have been a participant in and have sometimes conducted very successful meetings involving up to 250 people.)

As a guide, always try for the lowest number with which the purpose and desired outcomes might be achieved.

Generally for me, groups of four to eight people work best in problem-solving sessions, but they in turn may be one of several subgroups of the main, larger meeting.

How Long?

If the objectives include understanding the viewpoints of all the participants there's not much point in inviting 45 people when only 30 minutes is available. Nor, given even twice that much time, will the outcomes be achieved if during the meeting the group stays in the full forum for long, allowing only one person to speak to others at one time. Other techniques must be considered and planned.

There is no formula for accurately predicting the correct duration for a meeting. Rather than judging the success of a meeting by whether or not everything intended was achieved, try to assess it by how constructively the time was used.

Requests for meetings are often vague about the necessary time: *Just for a few minutes; A fairly short meeting; It shouldn't take long; or For 10 minutes or so.* Frequently, the time set aside corresponds to a “convenient” element of time shown in an electronic diary and is set to meet that convenience, rather than the needs of the meeting’s purpose. When I believe those indications are inaccurate or that their lack of specificity interferes with my planning, I either ask for greater clarity or provide it myself: *That sounds as though it will take about an hour, rather than 30 minutes; or I've found that it's useful to set aside an hour and a half for meetings such as this; or I can give you 40 minutes that day, would that be useful?*

Where?

The location must either be fit for purpose or compromise desired outcomes. Consider –

Heating	Ease of locating venue	Equipment
Lighting	Neutrality	Noise
Ventilation	Privacy	Space
Comfort	Interruptions	Refreshments

If the group is to sit for a long time, avoid places with uncomfortable chairs. Have you tried setting in them? Are boards or walls available for displays, writing, drawing, and for making things as visual as possible? Have you got all the gear? Does it work? Leave little to chance.⁵

Even if you are engaging professional conference venue suppliers to set up for your meeting, bear in mind that some are trained in sensory deprivation and comfort interference techniques. Chairs are sometimes designed for maximum discomfort or sudden collapse. Wherever possible, send the venue organiser a detailed specification (including a diagram) of the arrangement you want. Check it out on site if possible. Get to the venue at least 30 minutes early to allow time to panic as you contemplate the disparity between your carefully-stated needs and the reality. If you arrive 45 minutes ahead of others, there'll be time to collect your wits after the initial shock.

If the venue fails to meet human needs, you risk trapping the participants at basic levels of functioning, focused on their physiological needs or anxious, unwilling or unable to cooperate constructively.

Plan for Participation

The main prerequisite of people's full and mature participation at meetings is their own sense of security or safety. It is never safe to assume consistently high levels of these things in a meeting's participants.

⁵ I was once provided with a luxury conference venue next door to a large and vacant commercial building. On day two of my three-day programme, workers began demolishing the neighbouring building; the noise was hideous. On another occasion I arrived to find that my specification of a 100 square metre venue for a group was as specified but only three metres wide and impossible to work in. I had envisaged (and unwisely assumed) an approximately 10m by 10m layout.

How security and safety are provided for is not a precise science but there are specific techniques which have that effect; a theory known as *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* helps us understand the reasoning behind them and their place within the meeting process. If you want full and active involvement, I encourage you to become familiar with Maslow's theory.⁶

"All too often, [in the terminology of Transactional Analysis], it's the child who is running the show. Sometimes it's the endearing child, the playful child, the funny child, the mischievous child, the naughty child: sometimes the hurt child, the angry child. But mostly it's the same anxious little boy, fearful of disapproval, terrified of rejection and abandonment."

[Broadcaster and author Brian Edwards, in *Daddy Was a German Spy*]

Most workplaces and their meetings are full of leaders, managers and other staff who are, (as Brian Edwards writes) ". . . confident-looking people devoid of confidence; introverts in extroverts clothing; applause-seekers for whom no amount of applause is ever enough to convince them they're okay; people who measure their personal worth in ratings points and hear only the bad reviews – my fellow sufferers from free-floating anxiety." Much can and should be done at meetings to limit this kind of fragility being acted out in unhelpful behaviours such as variations on passivity, withdrawal, domination or attention-seeking. (See *Maslow, Ground-Rules* and other articles about facilitation in this section of the Subscriber Library.)

Plan to Relate the Process to Purpose and Intended Outcomes

In a hierarchy of learning objectives, *Know*, *Examine* and *Consider* are lower-order than *Understand*, *Apply*, *Carry out* or *Act*.

If your intended outcomes are very low-order, feel free to conduct the meeting by lecture(s), *Power Point* presentations or similarly non-involving techniques - although without an effective test at the end, you won't be sure that the participants will *know* the topic and you risk boring everyone to complete distraction.

Can you save everyone's time by documenting and distributing the information?

If it is necessary to impart information to a meeting, especially lots of it, the quality of *Knowing* can be raised if people are given opportunities to *talk it into place* in their minds. The usual presentation-with-opportunity-to-ask-questions-at-the-end is not the best way of doing this. Instead, during the meeting ask people to discuss the ideas with another participant or with a group of participants. You might ask that they (i) choose someone they don't know well, to raise issues or questions or doubts about the implications of the subject-matter; or (ii) discuss *What I don't understand about this . . .* or *The most important thing I see in this . . .* or *What concerns me most about this . . .* To further raise the quality of knowing, provide opportunities for spontaneous feedback on the issues raised by that discussion, or a "round" of individual feedback.

If the hoped-for outcomes are higher, an understanding of complicated issues for example, or an ability to apply new techniques, then full-forum methods (one person speaking at a time) should be avoided. If you work with adults and want them to learn, you would be wise to know a good deal about **how** adults learn. Typically, they do not learn from lectures. Overload and intellectual indigestion are states easily achieved.

⁶ Elsewhere within this section of our Subscriber Library you will find *Meetings: Making Full Participation Possible*, a discussion dealing with Maslow's Hierarchy in relation to meetings. Other articles in the Subscriber Library describe specific techniques for encouraging full participation.

Be Creative

As you plan your meeting, consider the processes and techniques you have most enjoyed when others have used them. Be bold. Give yourself permission to be innovative. However, before trying new techniques, consider that few people like being led or pushed blindly into anything. To make it easy for them to contribute and participate, plan first to make it safe. Have a clear rationale and purpose for whatever you ask people to do, and be prepared to express this briefly, before going ahead.

Plan for Problem Solving, Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution

All groups and most meetings address problems, attempt decisions and deal with differences of interests, needs, views and values. It's difficult to work out the best approach to any of these matters in the midst of them; skill in conflict resolution for instance, is most necessary when it is most difficult. Whatever is applied at these difficult times will be whatever you and the group have habituated previously. In the interests of group efficiency and effectiveness and to avoid wasted energy, unpleasant exchanges and frustrating beating-about-the-bush, you'd be well-advised to plan to develop some useful practices for these occasions.

If the group is to meet often over a long period, I recommend training the participants in methodical practices for group problem-solving and the basic skills of conflict resolution.⁷ Have clear decision-making models ready to introduce; one as your preferred approach and another as back-up or fall-back, when (and if) the first doesn't seem to work.

Constructive problem solving, decision-making and conflict resolution practices are introduced and described elsewhere within our Subscriber Library.

Plan to Use Performance Measures

Meetings often become bad meetings because nothing is done to monitor them against predetermined measures of desired performance or to make incremental refinements to keep them on track as part of a plan to make and keep them successful. Eventually, gaps between what is desirable and experienced in reality become so wide that they are extremely difficult to bridge.

Performance measures or *performance indicators* are the intentions (objectives, outcomes, targets or goals) and usually the *generic intentions* stated in measurable terms which, when achieved, are evidence of progress and success. *Key Performance Indicators* (KPIs) are the significant few amongst the relevant many measures that could be used. Their general purpose is to monitor progress against criteria important to those involved. Useful qualitative, subjective data can be drawn from their use to shed light on this broad question, *Are we on target?* and, if not, on the need to make improvements.

KPIs for meetings can be used (i) to help a group decide, in advance of their meetings what characteristics or qualities of meetings are desirable; (ii) to regularly monitor actual performance after every or a pre-determined number of meetings to check progress towards the ideal as part of Stage 4 in the Plan-and-Manage-the-Plan sequence (see graphic page 3); (iii) to evaluate the performance of a longer series of meetings as part of Stage 6 in the Plan-and-Manage-the-Plan sequence; (iv) to help a group focus on remedying known weaknesses or development needs; or (v) as a means of providing the meeting's facilitator (chairperson or leader) with feedback on the service provided by that person.

⁷ Fortunately, the basic skill-set for conflict resolution comprises (i) a methodical problem-solving process; and (ii) the listening, questioning and paraphrasing skills necessary for methodical problem-solving.

The act of making the KPI selection can do much to bring to the group's consciousness matters ordinarily not commented upon. This in turn can draw collective attention to one of the main precursors of success; awareness of a meeting's *process*, not merely its task.

KPIs can be set by a meeting's facilitator without consultation with the full group, especially where the meeting is a short, one-off occasion. Commitment to achieving them will, of course, be maximised if they are set in collaboration with the participants. A workable expediency is to have the full group process a prepared list of possible indicators, to indicate preferences. Those that they score highest or most frequently, can be chosen.

Here's a generic list of KPIs from which you and other meeting participants may want to generate a list specific to your meetings. I recommend using somewhere between six and 16.

- 1 The meeting purpose is clearly understood.
- 2 The distinction between purpose and agenda is clear.
- 3 The right people attend.
- 4 Helpful judgements are made about the time needed to deal with business.
- 5 The scheduled start and finish times are kept.
- 6 Everyone participates fully.
- 7 Speaking time is equitably shared.
- 8 There is a good sense of making progress.
- 9 The behavioural guidelines are clear and explicit.
- 10 Behaviour is kept within the agreed guidelines.
- 11 We routinely monitor meeting performance in order to keep it on track.
- 12 We deal with the important issues.
- 13 We make informed decisions.
- 14 Participants are kept on target.
- 15 There is a helpful balance between formality and informality.
- 16 Differing opinions are encouraged.
- 17 I am able to express my views easily.
- 18 I am listened to attentively.
- 19 I am treated respectfully.
- 20 My energy/interest levels are kept high.
- 21 Decision-making models are clear.
- 22 Agreed decision-making models are applied.
- 23 Agreed processes for conflict resolution are applied.
- 24 Agreed processes for problem solving are applied.
- 25 Meetings are a good use of my time.
- 26 There is a good sense of progress.
- 27 The meeting process enables me to give of my best.

People who attend meetings are the customers of those who conduct them.

Customers' views of the quality of the facilitation service are valid and should be routinely sought; quality improvement begins with their perception.

To evaluate progress against the selected KPIs, participants can be asked to anonymously score each of the chosen items (on a black piece of paper or on an already prepared form) using a number between 0 and 5 on a scale in which 0 = *Not at all* and 5 = *A great deal or Fully*.

Illustration:

Based on your observations and personal experience of the meeting(s), please assign each of the following Performance Indicators a "score between 0 and 5 from a scale in which 0 = *Not at all* and 5 = *A great deal or Fully*. Please, no fractions! When completed, fold the paper to cover your scores and hand it to the person nominated/leave it on the table. Do not indicate your identify.

- A. The meeting purpose was clear.
- B. The distinction between purpose and agenda was clear.
- C. The right people attended.
- D. The scheduled start and finish times were kept.
- E. Everyone participated fully.
- F. Speaking time was equitably shared.
- G. There was a good sense of making progress.
- H. The desired behavioural guidelines were clear
- I. Behaviour was held within the agreed guidelines.

Results can be quickly totaled and reported back to contributors in simple bar graph (Pareto chart) format. Repeated monitoring in this way allows changes in performance to be tracked.

Tom Watkins