



### Building the Foundation

#### ◇ COMPLY ◇ A Vital Part of Collections

**C = Complex Issues**

**O = Open Communications**

**M = Meetings, a Necessity That Needs Taming**

*“People who enjoy meetings should not be in charge of anything.” – Thomas Sowell*

If we want to discuss ideas, lay ground rules, and boost productivity, meetings are essential. So why do many people consider meetings as the most unproductive and wasted part of their day? Studies show that the negatives come from meetings that are too long with too much information to be covered thoroughly. How about too many or the wrong people attending? It is difficult to keep a person’s attention if the subject matter is not part of their skill set or job function. These opinions are so widespread that most business people consider meetings to be the number one productivity killer.

Love them or hate them, meetings can’t be eliminated, but they can be more useful and productive. Here are some thoughts:

- Is the meeting necessary? Would an email or memo be as effective? Make every effort to determine that a meeting is actually the best way to solve the problem, improve the process, or create a long- or short-term strategy for your team or department.
- Meetings are not social events. Invite people who are directly related to the issues to be covered. If decisions are to be made, check to make sure decision makers are available for the meeting.
- When the meeting request is sent out, it is a good idea to include an agenda and any preparation that may be needed.
- Limit the meeting length to an hour or less and communicate to attendees that coming unprepared is not an option.
- Start and end on time and stick to the agenda. It is important to allow time for discussion, but table off-topic subjects. This would include rehashing topics settled at prior meetings.
- Assign someone to take minutes, noting assigned tasks and due dates. Minutes should be distributed as soon as possible after the meeting.
- If a discussion becomes heated, it must be dealt with immediately, so everyone can stay focused.
- After the meeting, follow up on assigned tasks when they are due.
- Many companies have established a ‘no phone’ and ‘no computer’ policy to eliminate distractions and web browsing during meetings.

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