

CONDUCTING POWER-PACKED MEETINGS

HUGH'S 10 TIPS FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE MEETINGS



Conducting Power-Packed Meetings:

Hugh's 10 Tips for High Performance Meetings

No More Boring, Unproductive Meetings!



An agenda is the killer of productivity in meetings. Focus on specific outcomes expressed as deliverables instead. Drive for excellence on outcomes in all activities, and you will create the DNA for excellence for your organization and yourself. - Hugh Ballou, The Transformational Leadership Strategist

Yes, you read this correctly. Organizations hire me to run meetings, team planning sessions, board retreats, etc. Never once in over 22 years have I used an agenda for a meeting! I promise.

This is not just semantics. It is a paradigm shift. Think about meetings you have attended in the past. Think of a boring, unproductive meeting that you experienced. Maybe that particular session was not planned thoroughly. Maybe that particular session was planned with unclear outcomes. This is the nature of the problem: AGENDA = activity, and DELIVERABLES = results. Reframe your thinking and focus on outcomes, not on activity.

This is one paradigm shift that makes leaders more effective. Create and maintain a culture of excellence in the organization you lead. Focus on outcomes and excellence in every activity and every process. Transformational Leaders constantly build leadership skills in their inventory of leadership tools. Conflict management and conflict resolution become less of an issue when clarity of purpose takes away some potential for conflict.

Success is a mindset. Think about what you want to achieve and make it happen.

Start now!

TEAM Performance:

Conducting High Performance Meetings

Hugh Ballou

Conducting High Performance Meetings Is Like Conducting a Symphony Orchestra

When the conductor steps on the podium to conduct a meeting (rehearsal) with an orchestra, he or she is thoroughly prepared for success. Not only are the outcomes in mind, but also the process to get there has been completely planned. Here are Hugh's 10 tips for conduction high performance meetings:

- 1. Clearly state the purpose for the meeting.**

Don't hold a meeting unless there is a reason. Know why you are holding a meeting and tell others why and give a definition of the expected output of the meeting. Articulate the meeting objectives as clearly stated "deliverables" or some other term that communicates completion of specific objectives.

- 2. Review the entire flow for the session at the beginning**

Explain what will happen and when it will happen in this meeting. Help people understand where the meeting is going and how the group will get there. This will help each participant be fully present for each part of the meeting and to trust the process. Explain what type of discussion is needed (brainstorming, sorting, etc.) at each point in the meeting and define how those concepts will work. Explain how decisions will be made.

- 3. Plan the meeting thoroughly**

Begin with the deliverables, that is, know what you want to walk away with at the end of the meeting. Express the deliverables using specific, focused and measurable outcomes. When planning the meeting, allow twice the meeting time for your planning process. In order to get the best results a commitment to the best planning is necessary. Only plan for 65% of the available time. Some items will take more time than planned. Be efficient with your time and respect the time of others!

Outline every part of the meeting in your planning guide. Define how much time it will take to introduce the deliverables and give an overview of the meeting. Define how much time it will take to brainstorm, sort and refine. Do not leave out any part of the process.

Prepare visuals for the meeting. Record the input of the group on chart pads, storyboard cards, white boards or some other media that everyone can constantly review as they make decisions. Define where the group input is needed and where it is not. Explain the difference.

4. **Identify the leader/moderator/facilitator of the meeting**

One person must control the flow of the meeting. One person must facilitate to insure that the group stays on task and nobody dominates all the discussions or decisions. The facilitator also ensures that the meeting addresses all the deliverables as promised and involves everyone in the process.

5. **Begin and end on time**

Know how long the meeting will take, pace the meeting and end on time as promised. Keep faith with the participants. Begin on the exact time specified even if everyone is not present. Do not penalize those who have arrived on time. If you communicate that you are not keeping your word as a leader with something as simple as a starting time, then how will your work be trusted in more important matters. Assign a priority for items in the session. Know which items to drop or postpone if the meeting is more complex than expected and begins to take longer than planned.

6. **Design ways to prompt input from each attendee**

If people have been invited to a meeting, then expect them to participate. Participating will validate each person's part in the process and ultimately to the outcome. This gives each person ownership of the outcome.

7. **Create a group list of “norms” for process together**

If the group meets on an ongoing basis or on a regular schedule, then it might be a good idea to develop a set of operational guidelines for how the group process works and how decisions will be made.

8. **Record the group's information where all can see**

Writing down ideas gives validation to the ideas contributed. A visual record will also remind the group of the data generated keeping it present for making better decisions. Record ideas and concepts exactly as stated. Do not interpret or put in your “two cents worth.” Record first, judge or sort later – this is especially important when the material is sensitive, challenging or complex.

9. **Stay in control of the meeting**

If a participant hijacks the meeting, take it back, gently. Do not allow any participant to ramble or give speeches that are unnecessary or lengthy. The facilitator must remain in control of the process and take it back from time to time.

10. **Do not adjourn without setting accountability standards**

If actions are needed, assign responsibility and a completion date for each item. Good ideas will only materialize into results when they are a part of an action plan. Agree on the next step(s) or next meeting date before ending the meeting. As people are invited to attend the meeting they should be instructed to bring their

calendars. This is one reason why. Affirm the participants and their contributions. Review the list of deliverables to validate your success. Celebrate!

Meeting Planning Worksheet

Decide the purpose of your project

- *Identify the results that you want to see at the completion of the project*
- *Define those results in specific language describing the future in present tense*

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

Identify the participants

- *Define who will be working on this project*
- *Seek diversity in perspective*
- *Strive for enough people to create energy, but not too many to impede making decisions (8 to 14 people is optimum)*
- *Get a commitment*
 - *To attend meetings*
 - *To participate in meetings*
 - *To agree to manage tasks*
 - *To accomplish assignments between meetings*

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Define the deliverables

- *Define the meeting outcomes in terms of deliverables*
- *Use language that is specific and quantifiable*
- *Keep the list to a manageable number*
- *Think in terms of what to walk away with at the end of the meeting*

DELIVERABLES OF THIS SESSION: (separate set of deliverables for each session)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Define the current reality

- *Identify all the background or relevant information about the situation or project*
- *Be brief but comprehensive*
- *Be honest but not critical*
- *Include all relevant data in concise descriptive bullets*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (use a separate sheet for a comprehensive list)

Give the project a title

- *Title your project like the title of a book that you want people to pick up*
- *Be sure that the title describes the project*

TOPIC: (project title)

About Hugh Ballou



Hugh Ballou

The Transformational Leadership Strategist

Hugh Ballou orchestrates success with Transformational Leaders around the world with his unique and effective leadership skills developed in over 40 years working as conductor or orchestras and choirs. He has 10 books in print 10 ebooks, and 10 online leadership programs and e-books for church, nonprofit, and business leaders.

The skill sets of planning for success, constructing powerful goals, and delegating with authority are consistent themes where many leaders underperform.

Ballou's unique ability in inspire and motivate even the most difficult of audiences has made him the expert in the field of Transformational Leadership. Transformational Leaders build strong leaders on teams that are motivated, focused and highly effective in setting and implementing powerful goals.

- Hugh's Podcast: <https://hughballou.com/podcast/>
- The Nonprofit Exchange Podcast: <http://TheNonprofitExchange.org>
- Apply for Community Members in the SynerVision Leadership Foundation's online community for nonprofit leaders and clergy: <https://synervisionleadership.org/community-overview/>
- Check out my leadership programs: <https://synervisionleadership.org/courses-list>