



## Conducting Effective Meetings

Most managers spend many hours each week leading or taking part in meetings. Make sure that yours are effective and well managed. Here are some key tips to help you make the most of meeting time.

- Always ask yourself: Is this meeting necessary? Is this the most effective way to deal with this issue, problem, project or opportunity? Will the right people (the decision makers) be at the meeting? If not, is there any point in having the meeting?
- Set the parameters of the meeting in advance. Allocate a starting time and finishing time and stick to them.
- Develop an agenda. Give the meeting some structure. What are the objectives? Define, state clearly and stick to your objectives of the meeting.
- Make your agenda mean something. Don't just have a "shopping list." Let those attending know whether they are to discuss, decide or recommend on the issues identified.
- Appoint someone to run/chair/own the meeting whose job it is to keep the meeting moving.
- Stick to the agenda as realistically as possible. If necessary, allocate times beside each agenda item. If you cannot resolve an agenda item, make a decision as to how it will be handled outside of the meeting, and move on.
- Is everything necessary for the meeting prepared and available? Flip charts, notepads, copies of reports or records?
- What are the client's/supplier's issues likely to be?
- Remember: if you meet participants at their offices, you can always get up and leave to keep the meeting on time.
- Is there an alternative to a face-to-face meeting? A conference call? A videoconference? Decision making via email?
- If you find that meetings with certain people aren't working—change the way you hold the meeting. Involve other people. Set a strict agenda. Change the venue, the time of day or the length of the meeting. Talk to them about what's not working. In most cases, the people you are meeting with are just as eager to make it effective and swift.
- Finally, keep concise notes of every meeting—it's amazing how often you need to refer back.