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Leadership Secrets for Great Meetings

By Eileen McDargh

By Eileen McDargh, CSP, CPAE

Ineffective and poorly-run meetings serve as one of the top talent and time wasters. Develop the skill to run a tight, highly-focused meeting with just the right number and kind of people in attendance and your stature as a leader rises.

First, figure out what is the specific outcome of the meeting and start with that as the written objective. Give your meeting a name that even states the "objective". Next, ask yourself who has the greatest information or talent and should be at the meeting. Figure the personnel cost for the meeting. For example, if an employee has an average annual salary of \$50,000, the per hour cost for that one person is \$96 per hour. (This includes salary plus benefits and general company overhead). You can extrapolate other salary costs from this base. Here are other tips to make this meeting move from average to great:

- (1) Put a specific time frame on the meeting and start on time.
If people show up late, create some fun—but telling—response for tardiness. In one organization, the latecomer has to sing to everyone. In another, the latecomer buys cokes for everyone. In another, the latecomer is given a scarlet "L" on a tent card. In Saturn Automotive plant meetings, if the door is closed, you are late and an alarm rings if you try to enter.
- (2) Develop good facilitation skills, making sure everyone participates and is heard from
- (3) Summarize questions, outcomes, actions. Summarize frequently
- (4) Have the names of who should attend on the agenda which is sent out at least 48 hours in advance.
- (5) Create a "parking lot" notebook. If an issue is brought up that is not on the agenda but might be addressed at another time, write it down so it can be tackled.

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(6) Consider a stand-up meeting. To move people through quickly, have no chairs in the meeting room. It's amazing how quickly people can get work done when there is no place to sit.

(7) At the end of the meeting, and as a way of staying focused and practicing continuous improvement of meeting management, tell the group the personnel cost of the meeting and if the money could have been spent more wisely in another format?

(8) Make sure a summary of the meeting is sent to the participants along with any action items or next steps, a due date, and the person or group to which they are assigned.

(9) To break a meeting routine, you might consider beginning by asking people to come prepared to tell the group about some person whom they want to acknowledge for outstanding service. Starting off by highlighting positive performance—particularly of unsung employees—is a powerful gesture.

(10) Don't forget to say thank you. Time is the only true non-renewable, irreplaceable resource. When people give you their time, they gave you a piece of their lives.

For more information on leadership ideas, communication skills, or work life balance practices, click on Leadership and read more by Eileen McDargh, an expert in work/life leadership issues.

Eileen McDargh is a powerful keynote speaker, recognized work/life leadership expert, and award winning author. Discover your organizational and personal resiliency factor with this free online survey

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Top Ten Reasons to Hold Family Meetings

By Dan and Suzanne Bond

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Top Ten Reasons to Hold Family Meetings

From CoachVille's "Awesome Dads, dare to be a hero!" community.

Check us out at: <http://dbc593.cvcommunity.com>

1. Make stronger connections among individuals and, therefore, creates a closer family.

In this very busy world, designating this time every week is one way to ensure that family members stay connected with one another. Relationships are living things, and must be nurtured. Family meetings are about nourishing our relationships with the most important people in our lives. Form the habit of connecting regularly.

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2. Create family value statements and operating principles.

Family meetings give you a chance to discuss what's important to you as a family and to create family value statements, which reflect your collective thoughts. Similarly, they give you a chance to talk about how you want to operate together as a family and treat one another, by developing family operating principles.

3. Share appreciations and give thanks for our many blessings.

This is a way to give children and adults permission to let one another know how much they are appreciated, and to share the many things they have to be thankful for. It is far too easy to take the blessings in our lives, and our loved ones, for granted if we do not form the habit of appreciating on a regular basis.

4. Improves family communication

More and more today, family members are going in different directions and at break-neck speed. Add to this the fact that each person is unique and perceives the world in his or her own way.

Miscommunication can cause hard feelings. It is crucial to never assume that what you are saying is being understood the way you intended it, or that you are understanding what others are trying to tell you. Always take the time to check perceptions. The family meeting can be a "rest area" where time is set aside to make certain that communications are clear.

5. Provide leadership experience

Everyone gets a turn at leading the family meetings. This is a great way for children to get early leadership experience. Be certain that their contributions in this regard are honored and respected. You will be building a confident future leader, who will experience the joy of positive leadership.

6. Offers an opportunity to stay current regarding upcoming commitments, activities, and events.

Family meetings are wonderful opportunities to review the family calendar, clarify who needs to be where and when, as well as who will be taking responsibility for what. Once again, clear communication and joint planning can relieve the ongoing stress of busy lives.

7. Gives an avenue to celebrate each other's successes.

This is most important. Family meetings should always contain a time to celebrate successes of each family member during the week. These need not be big, monumental events but can simply be every day successes. This not only creates pride and joy in daily life, but also forms the habit in each family member of looking for the positive in one another.

8. Provides time to plan family vacations, activities, and special events.

This gives everyone in the family a chance to give their input into a family trip or experience, rather than the adults always doing the planning. When the whole family is involved, everyone is much more likely to enjoy the event. Investment in family activities, for each member, is often directly proportional to his or her involvement in the planning. A richer shared experience is most often the result.

9. Establish a safe, respectful environment to problem solve.

By following the family's operating principles, and with open and honest communication, children will learn that problems can be discussed openly and solved respectfully together. Creating win-win

solutions takes practice, for adults as well as for children and youth.

10. Have fun together

These meetings provide a great opportunity for the family to participate in fun family activities. As family members get to know one another better, share stories, laugh, and problem solve together, deeper relationships develop. Try to weave fun into every family meeting.

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I earned by doctorate degree from Seattle University in 1982. I recently retired from the superintendent's job and work just part time as a coach to people who studying to become principals and superintendents. I am excited to provide this same kind of support to parents and other educators who may learn of my services.



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