



Tool #11 - Part A

How to Make an Impact at Meetings

Part A Includes:

Lesson

Quiz

Goal Setting

(Each tool is presented in a 2 part lesson format.
Part B will follow in two weeks)

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Employee Success Toolkit

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Meetings are necessary to keep a project rolling. Meetings are where you discuss problems and brainstorm solutions with the other participants. Meetings are where tasks are assigned, and people are held responsible for completing them. Meetings are also where you can find out what's going on in your organization, where you can get connected with people, and where you can make an impact.

"You can get the most out of meetings when you use them to advance your career while you also work to achieve the meetings objectives," explains Marjorie Brody, founder of Brody Communications and author of, *Help! Was That a Career Limiting Move?*

Before The Meeting

"Inquire about what's going to be discussed, and what are the goals. This gives a message to the leader that you want to come ready to contribute," says Marcia Zidle in her article, "Making Meetings Work – Don't Just Show Up, Stand Out and Shine."

Think about how you can contribute. What important message do you want to get across? This message becomes your mission and your contribution to the meeting. Try to relate it to something on the meeting agenda or some idea that will benefit your company. However, in some cases it might not be a related topic, but an important message of a more general nature – about a community concern or project, etc.

As you think about your possible message, you will feel your excitement rising. You already have a different attitude about your meeting, because now you have a mission and you can make an impact.

"This is a wonderful way to get recognition in your career and also add great benefit to the purpose of the meeting," says Brody.

1. Find out what the objectives are. Call the meeting leader and say, "Why am I included? What are your expectations? What is the agenda? I'm asking so that I can be better prepared."
2. Come with an attitude of participation. That means to think about ideas you can contribute that will add value to the meeting. It also means to prepare emotionally before the meeting with a positive attitude. Get to the meeting a few minutes early so you can settle down and think about the positive aspects of being at the meeting.
3. Come with the necessary materials. Did you promise to bring a report on the progress since the last meeting? Be sure you have it.

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Be Prepared

Think of your message as a commercial. A sixty-second message will be long enough to have impact and short enough to not disrupt the meeting.

“Come prepared with well thought through suggestions and supporting information. Rehearse your presentation several times. Try writing a grabber sentence for your opener and another for a strong ending. Then condense the rest of your thoughts to an outline using short phrases to trigger your thoughts,” suggests Zidle.

You can tell a short personal story to get your point across. An appropriate quote will add impact to your message. Write your notes on a 3X5 card, and keep them short. Remember that you only have sixty seconds for your message.

During The Meeting

Get to the meeting early. Sit opposite the leader so that you can look directly at him or her.

Stay alert. If you want people to listen to what you have to say you must be attentive and interested in the meeting’s agenda. Sit on the edge of your chair. This will give you more energy, and it will help you stay alert.

Take notes. Even if you are not the official note taker, taking notes will make it easier for you to listen and concentrate on what everyone is saying.

Ask questions if you need more information, if you don’t understand something, or if you question the wisdom of a decision.

Deliver your message. Unless you have planned a certain time in advance with the meeting leader, you will have to find a suitable moment to contribute your message. Here are two possible ways:

1. Answer a question, and then make a smooth transition to your topic. Politicians are experts at this – remember the presidential debates? You can say, “... and that question reminds me of another important issue.” Then, state your sixty-second message.
2. Respond to a statement someone else has said with, “That’s a very important point, and I would like to make another important point about....”

“The best way to get recognition is to make sure that you are a contributor or a voice within the first 10 minutes. Most of the time, if you haven’t participated until much later in the meeting, you have no voice,” advises Brody.

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If you have done your preparation before the meeting, you ought to have some ideas that are worth being discussed, so don't be hesitant about bringing up ideas or asking appropriate questions.

"Don't allow the loud mouth or the extravert to cut you off," warns Brody. If you are speaking, and someone starts interrupting, say, "Let me finish, Mary," or "Mary, as I was saying..." Always come back to the fact that it was your idea, and don't allow people to steal your thunder.

If someone comes up with an idea that you like, support it by saying, "I really support that idea. I agree with it because it's in alignment with our objectives, and because..." This way you are lending your support and encouragement for a useful idea while also getting noticed for your participation in the meeting.

Watch Your Body Language

"Don't doodle, swivel in your chair, or look around the room. From the time you are in the room you want to be sitting up straight, looking attentive and interacting at times that are appropriate," recommends Brody. If you find your mind wandering, taking notes will help you concentrate on the meeting.

Help The Meeting Run Smoothly

For example, if the meeting leader gets off track, you can add value to a meeting by saying, "We only have another 15 minutes, how do we want to spend our time?"

When The Meeting Is Over

Follow up by doing what you have promised. This will give you a reputation for being trusted with responsibility – a very helpful attribute when management is considering promotions.

"What happens after a meeting can be just as important as what takes place during it. Ideas presented must be implemented, and decisions carried out. Even as a participant, you can help to ensure that the decisions made become realities. Meeting follow-ups can give you great opportunities for building a reputation for leadership. You might, for example, offer to present the group's concern for more flexible scheduling to your department head, then follow through in getting a response," recommends Zidle.

Follow up with the relationships. You get great insights from people and their needs at meetings. When you follow up by helping other participants meet their goals it helps you look better.

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As you can see there are many ways you can make an impact at meetings.

So, in the future, instead of dreading workplace meetings, you now know how to use them to achieve your objectives and also demonstrate your value to your company.

Experts quoted:

Marjorie Brody, founder of Brody Communications and author of, *Help! Was That a Career Limiting Move?* available at <http://www.brodycommunications.com>

Marcia Zidle M.S. N.C.C, founder of Leadership Hooks - a business coaching company. <http://www.leadershiphooks.com>

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Tool #11 - Quiz
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Complete the quiz, and give the answers to your supervisor.

Name _____ Date _____

1. Why are meetings important?

2. What kinds of things should you think about prior to the meeting?

3. What are three actions you should take during a meeting?

4. Why is it important to follow up with ideas and relationships after a meeting is over?

5. Name three ways you can contribute to a meeting.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Tool #11 - Your Goals for How to Make an Impact at Meetings

Name _____ Date _____

What are your 3 main goals for this month for making an impact at meetings?

Make a copy of this to give to your supervisor, and keep one for yourself.

Post your goals in your workplace where you can easily see them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Signature _____

In two weeks you will receive Part B of this lesson. It will contain:

- The 7 key points from this lesson to refresh your memory, and
- A place for you to record your progress toward your goals.

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Additional Resources

All are available on The Confidence Center Web at
www.ConfidenceCenter.com

Free Resources

Email Newsletter:

Employee Morale and Confidence Tips

It has creative ideas you can use every week to keep up morale.

Sign up for Free at www.ConfidenceCenter.com

Assessments:

Are you happy at work? Take the [Employee Morale Assessment](#)

How confident are you? Take the [Confidence Quiz](#)

Articles and Past Newsletters

Calendar of Special Days:

Special days you can celebrate for every month of the year.

Fun Zone:

Jokes, cartoons, and more - when you just need a break.

Coaching:

Telephone coaching by our certified professional coach. To get one *free* coaching session.

Details at <http://www.confidencecenter.com/serv06.htm>

Low Cost Resources

Products:

Books, eBooks, videos, and other products to make you more successful at work.

Seminars:

We offer in-house seminars, customized for your company or organization.

Tele-seminars:

Telephone seminars on employee morale and employee performance. These will be announced in our newsletter and on our web.