

News From Terre Haute, Indiana

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BUSINESS CENTS: A kind jolt for those boring meetings

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TERRE HAUTE — *ZZZZZzzzz!* We have all attended multiple meetings in which the content, speaker or possibly both left us yawning, stretching and blinking repeatedly, fighting to stay awake.

Caffeine and sugar will only carry us so far. Are you guilty of having boring meetings? Do you find that your employees or guests fall asleep or are heavy eyed in meetings? Do you receive emails and phone calls that sound like “Do I really have to come to this meeting?” or “I’m just too busy to make it”?

In reality, I believe that all of us have heard responses like this before or even been guilty of making the same excuses.

So what is the recipe for a more successful and engaging meeting? There are several components to a successful meeting. For example, set up a time limit.

Many of the most productive meetings are approximately one hour. You can say interesting and engaging items that pertain to topic without “beating around the bush” in less than one hour, but you must use the time wisely. In addition, keep attendees involved and keep an element of excitement or unpredictability in the meetings.

There are also several other factors to incorporate to ensure a more successful meeting:

- Make the meeting a priority: Instead of rushing to a meeting and then figure out what you will address, plan ahead so that your employees or attendees know you are not wasting their time.
- Have an agenda or a plan: Know the objective(s) of the meeting and communicate that with your audience.
- Begin with the objective: Know what you want to achieve at this meeting and engage the audience on how what they want to achieve out of the meeting as well.
- Engagement: Get the audience involved. Distribute an agenda so employees and attendees can appropriately prepare for the meeting.
- Limit the niceties: I actually had never considered this until I did some research. It is nice to have a

limited number of refreshments, like cookies or fruit, along with water, but avoid too much food and drink, as this invites conversations to take place outside of the meeting agenda.

- Don't ramble: This goes back to the objective. Be purposeful in your statements so you can get to the specific point of interest.
- Surprise: Keeping your employees or attendees a little bit in suspense helps increase the level of engagement and excitement among those who are at the meeting. This will also help increase ownership of employee productivity or the attendees in the meeting outcomes.

Meetings that are well-managed are more likely to be productive and interesting, and you will encounter less resistance in achieving the objectives, outcomes and goals. Remember most of all that your attitude will directly impact meetings, so be positive and exhibit good behavior.

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