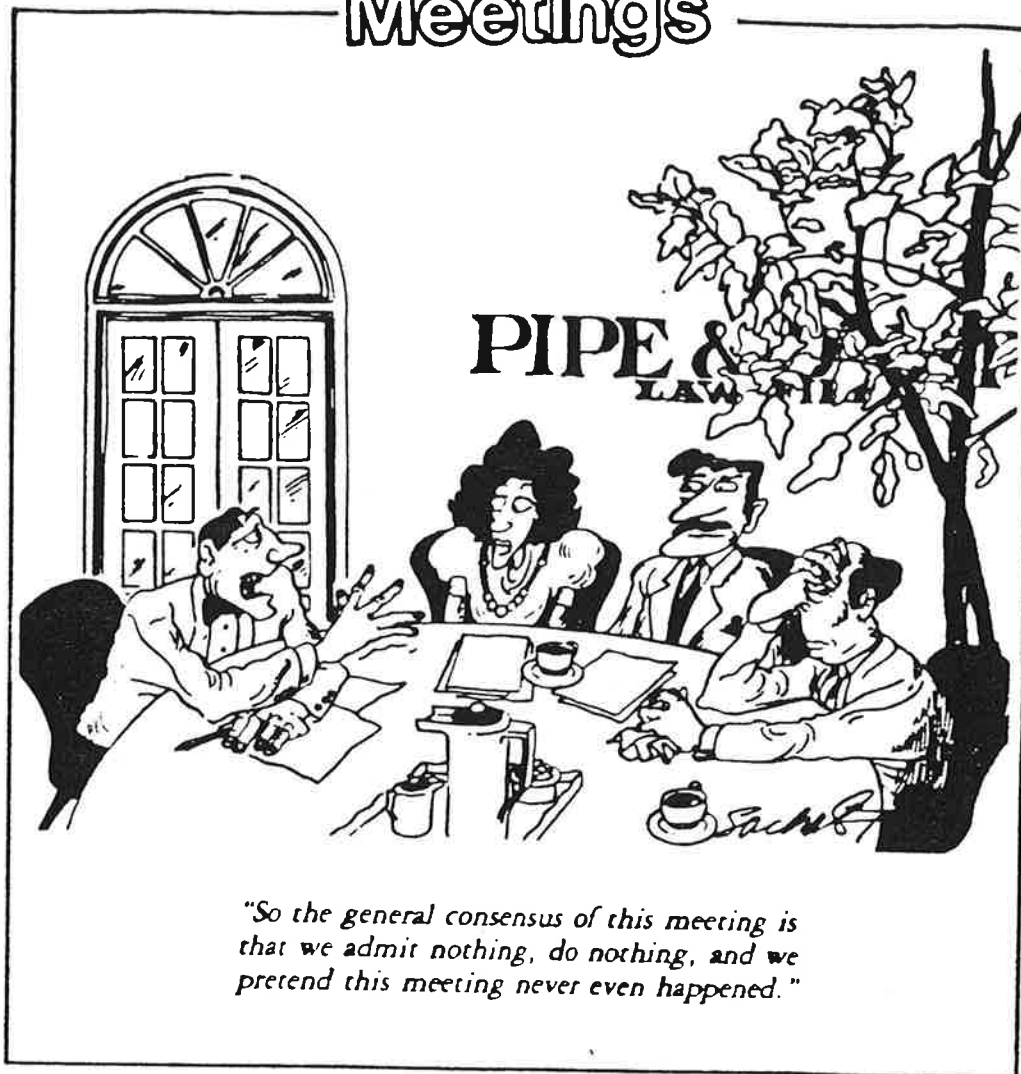


10 Steps to Holding a Successful Meeting

1. **The meeting is necessary.**
2. **The purpose of the meeting is clear** to everyone at the meeting.
3. **The things to be discussed at the meeting (the agenda) is circulated in advance** so that everyone can prepare for the meeting.
4. **The meeting starts at the scheduled time** with introductions (if necessary) and a check-in so that everyone is aware of the mental and emotional state of everyone else.
5. **The rules of the meeting are clear**, such as the discussion process, the decision-making process, and when there will be breaks.
6. **The roles and responsibilities of each person at the meeting are clear**, such as who will facilitate the meeting; who will present on which topics of discussion; who will take notes summarizing the meeting discussion and decisions; who will carry out tasks and within what time frames
7. **The meeting is held in a comfortable room**, which includes good ventilation, good lighting and seating, low noise levels and wheelchair accessibility.
8. **The meeting facilitator maintains effective order.** This includes: having an objective attitude; listening carefully and trying to understand the viewpoint of others; being flexible; refraining from giving or accepting personal opinions as fact; helping others develop their views and ideas in a courteous and alert way; avoiding emotional outbursts yet acknowledging people's feelings, and; maintaining confidences and avoiding gossip.
9. **Everyone has an opportunity to be heard.** The facilitator can very much help ensure participation by everyone before decisions are made by asking: "Now that we have heard from some people, would anyone who has not spoken like to add their ideas?" or "How do the ideas presented so far sound to those of you who have been thinking about them?"
10. **The meeting ends at the scheduled time** with appreciation expressed to those who helped organize, facilitate and play other key roles in the meeting, and with a check-out prior to ensure people felt satisfied with the outcomes of the meeting and that their participation was appreciated.

Meetings



THINGS THAT CAN GO WRONG AT MEETINGS

Here is a list of things that disrupt meetings. Everyone at a meeting, especially the meeting facilitator, should help ensure that these things do not happen at meetings:¹

- The person speaking is interrupted.
- The person speaking is ignored.
- People carry on several conversations at a time or talk to the person beside them.
- The meeting moves from one subject to another before the discussion is finished.
- People make jokes or other comments and do not share them with everyone.
- People become impatient and bang on the table, shout or clear their throat.
- People walk around or walk in and out of the meeting.
- People bring up personal problems instead of sticking to the subject being discussed.
- People gossip or call people hurtful names.
- People fall asleep.

¹ List adapted from Kahn, Si. A Guide for Grassroots Leaders Organizing (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982)