Episode #11: How To Run More Effective Meetings - Part 2

Welcome to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others.

Hello. Today's episode is the second of two installments where I provide tips to run more effective meetings. I'm your host, coach Percy Cannon.

In our last episode you heard three tips for running more successful meetings, which were designed to help you deliver better results:

1. Can you make the purpose of the meeting clearer? What specifically do you want to achieve?
2. Are you stepping into the other person's shoes? Do you see an opportunity to view the situation from the other person's perspective?
3. Can you let go of having to be right all the time? Can you trust the greater outcome and allow others to come up with the answers?

By using these tips, your meeting participants will become more engaged in finding solutions to the business challenges you are addressing.

In today's episode you will get ten more tips on how to make your meetings more effective.

How many meetings have you been part of during the last five working days? 10? 20? Too many to count while you are listening to this podcast?

And how many of them were boring, too long and unproductive? 10? 20? Most of them? All of them?

Boring, long and mostly unproductive meetings seem to be a common denominator in the workplace. I have been part of far too many of them myself. But these types of meetings do not have to be the norm. Here are 10 tips to improve every stage of your meetings:

I will start with three suggestions that you can do <u>before the meeting</u>:

1. **Define the nature of the meeting**: Are you mixing tactical with strategic topics? Can they be addressed separately to focus and limit the meeting time? And if the meeting is just informational, is it really needed? Can you inform the participants in writing, through a video or another medium?
2. **Limit the agenda** to a few issues for discussion, preferably no more than three.
3. **Set expectations**. Email the agenda and tell participants what preparation you expect, as well as the specific decisions you anticipate will be made during the meeting.

I have three more suggestions for what you can do at the <u>beginning of the meeting</u>:

4. **Ask all participants to “check-in”.** This is a practice that has been well received in my facilitation and team coaching engagements. It should take only a few seconds per person to indicate what their #1 goal is for the meeting, and if there is anything that is preventing them from being 100% engaged throughout the meeting. Regarding the latter point, somebody may have a kid sick at home or be expecting an important call from a customer. This helps the meeting run more smoothly, as people won’t get distracted when somebody needs to step out of the room to handle a pre-informed situation.
5. **Review the agenda**, the key outcomes and time allocation you anticipate from each agenda topic, and the role you expect from all participants. Make any last-minute agenda adjustments.
6. **Review your meeting ground-rules**. If you haven’t generated any, allocate time to do so. Delegate the role of facilitator to an internal or external person. Empower this person to enforce the ground-rules and help the group stick to the agenda topics and time allocations.

What can you do <u>during the meeting</u>? I have two suggestions:

7. **Promote a healthy debate**. Uproot any “undiscussables”—those relevant topics that participants may have on their minds but may feel it’s not politically correct to bring them out in the open. Ensure all participants have a chance to express their opinion in a safe place.
8. **Go deep into each topic**. In one of the companies I worked for, presenters had to prepare an “Issue sheet” to be used during the meetings with senior executives. It was not a PowerPoint deck with dozens of slides. It was typically a 1-page document where you spelled out the issue to be addressed, the data points relevant to the decisions, the options being assessed, and the recommended course of action. All in one page…. and all presented in a few minutes. The rest of time was spent discussing the data, the options being assessed and then on arriving at a decision. Very powerful.

Finally, what can you do at the <u>end of the meeting</u>? I also have two suggestions for this stage:

9. **Have a very simple template with three columns labeled what-who-when**: What is the agreement on issue #1, who is accountable for it and by when it will be finished. End the meeting summarizing the what-who-when for all the issues, which hopefully will be for no more than three. Ask the person who has been taking notes to project this template or share her screen in virtual meetings. Get an explicit acceptance from the people accountable for each topic. By explicit I mean to have each topic owner verbally accept the task assigned to them and be clear on what is expected from them and by when.
10. **End on time**. Better yet, end a couple of minutes ahead of time. Make this one of your ground-rules and comply with it. No exceptions. This will send the message to the participants that you are serious about making the meeting truly effective.

Are you ready to turnaround your meeting effectiveness? Follow one or more of these ten suggestions and you will start seeing improvements.

I hope you enjoyed today’s episode. In the next one, I will share tips on how to manage disagreements with your boss.

If you like what you heard today, and depending on the platform you are using, let me ask you to please rate, subscribe or follow this podcast and share it with your coworkers and friends.

Also, you can visit my website at www.cannon.consulting or, if available in this platform, use any of the links provided in the Details section to download the transcript of today's episode, access the resources mentioned today, ask questions, suggest topics of interest, request a free consultation call with me, and connect on LinkedIn.

This is coach Percy Cannon, working to **help you make the rest of your life…the best of your life®**.

Thank you for listening to THE CAREER ACCELERATOR, the podcast where corporate managers will find tips and tools to deliver results through others. Stay tuned for our next episode!

Percy's BIO

Percy provides corporate managers and leadership teams with customized coaching programs that help them develop the skills and capabilities needed to significantly increase their business results through others and accelerate their career growth.
Percy is an "alumnus" from three multinational corporations, Procter & Gamble, IBM & Microsoft, with whom he spent close to three decades.
Since 2011 he has been helping corporate executives, managers and employees **make the rest of their life…the best of their life®.**
Percy has worked in the United States and across several countries in Latin America as an Executive Coach, Leadership Team Consultant and Keynote Speaker, serving companies such as Microsoft, Procter & Gamble, Citibank, Tiffany & Avianca.
Percy is a Certified Professional Coach from Wainwright Global, Authorized Partner for "The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team" and "Everything DiSC" and certified as a "Go-Giver" speaker & coach.
He published his first book in 2012-13 in English (The Business Apostolate: Insights to Define and Achieve Your Mission in Life) and in Spanish (El Negocio Más Grande de su Vida).
Percy is a Consulting Partner with Grupo Azimuth and the Chapter Director for the COO Forum in Southeast Florida.
He has lived in 9 different cities and 5 countries, and speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese fluently.
Percy is married, has 3 children and 6 grandchildren, and is a passionate runner & reader.

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