

When and where to meet...

By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

Essentially meetings fall into two categories: formal and informal. Each has its values and guidelines to being successful or productive.

Here are a few examples of **informal meetings** that you might recognize and apply:

- **Impromptu meetings:** are great on short notice to discuss issues frankly, and to reach decisions quickly without the input of large groups or attendees.
- **Small informal meetings:** are useful for discussing, problem-solving and giving feedback. They are planned so preparation is required but action can be implemented because of smaller numbers.
- **Thunder-thinking or Brainstorming sessions:** are great to generate new ideas or illicit quick ideas for solutions to situational problems.
- **Stand up meetings:** or meetings-on-the-run can be a very effective form of decision making, problem solving, and information sharing and gathering. Taking the initiative and seeking out others who need to give input allows you to get in quickly, share relevant information and make a quick decision.

Formal meetings:

- **Board meetings:** attended by the board of directors of a company or association on a regular basis to discuss business or items for good of group. Reports to the membership.
- **Standing committees:** is a subgroup of a company or association board given responsibilities for recurring tasks or delegated tasks. Reports back to the board.
- **Ad hoc committees:** association or company board may strike an ad hoc committee to study or deal with a particular issue needing attention. Reports back to the board.
- **Public meetings:** open to everyone. Used by local government or private action groups to consult the public on various issues. Sometimes used by companies wanting to discuss developments or other changes which might affect the public in a given area or region.
- **Conference:** offers the opportunity for a variety of presentations to be given. May also form the basis for AGM or other meeting necessary for good of group.
- **External meetings:** might be two groups meeting to negotiate such as a trade - union negotiation. Confidentiality is more important in this case and meeting is normally held on more neutral ground. May have a facilitator or mediator to allow for frank discussion and control meeting time and agenda.
- **Annual General Meetings:** often mandatory on a yearly basis for companies and associations to conduct business, elect boards, report to members and shareholders, discuss business and activities during current year and for upcoming year. Notice must be given.
- **Extraordinary General Meetings:** a meeting called at any time between AGMs if member or shareholder approval is needed for immediate action. Notice must be given.

Being aware of the purposes of various meetings will allow you to prepare yourself and conduct yourself accordingly. It will also help to determine whether the meeting is on focus or not.

Copyright 2000-2013 All rights reserved. Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey, CKD is the author of 30 books including (Secrets of Effective Customer Service, Prepare Yourself to WIN!), and one of only 65 Accredited Professional Speakers. His articles to enhance productivity have appeared in local and North American trade journals and consumer publications. His free, online 'zine, Ideas@work can be subscribed by visiting his site at: <http://www.ideaman.net>