

News

Meetings, a qualitative analysis

- By Ankita Shreeram

Make the most of those hours spent in the meeting room

Long-winded and aimless meetings are the kinds that generate jokes and comics on how to survive meetings. But a focused agenda-setting and decision-making are no joking matter. "Lengthy meetings should be avoided to cultivate a work culture of time-efficiency and meetings should not just be brief and crisp, but at the same time, be such that there is an easy and a clear exchange of information. The flow of communication is the deciding factor for any good meeting and channels that facilitate such communication should be created," says Shrikant Wakharkar, GM, The Grand New Delhi. "First and foremost, don't call for meetings unless you are expecting actionable inputs out of it. Restrict the participant list to only those people who are essential for the meeting, as otherwise it leads to wasting precious resource time," advises Dr Devashish Tarra, head- marketing & PR, NationWide Primary Healthcare Services Pvt. Ltd.

The most frequently heard grouse among employees is that nobody ever listens to them. The flaw may lie in the practice of conducting mass meetings with attendees ranging from all levels of the organisation. "All meetings should try to follow a two layered process to ensure an optimal and effective utilisation of the management's productive time at all levels. The primary meetings can be held by the middle and junior management to brainstorm on ideas and concepts. During the Key Officers' Meeting (KOM), which comprises of senior management from various functions, the final proposal can be presented jointly by the cross-functional team and the most capable member of the team," says Gaurav D. Garg, MD & CEO, Tata AIG General Insurance Company.

If you have a point to make, you have to ensure that you are heard. "When putting forth a point, it is important to structure your thoughts well. A recommended model for structuring is the PREP model that suggests – state the Position, give a Reason for that position, substantiate the reason with an Example and then again state your Position," concludes Sangeeta Singh, partner, HR, KPMG India.

Nikul Shah, president global HR and corporate services, Omnitech gives pointers for maximising the potential of meetings:

Avoid interruptions - Ensure mobile phones are turned off or kept on silent, and if any questions raised, must be discussed quickly or kept for a post meeting Q&A session as it's vital to stick to the agenda.

Capture and assign actions items - Most meetings result in action items or tasks for the participants or attendees. Thus, it's essential to capture all the details of the assignment, which can be briefed while summarising the meeting outcome.

Ask for feedback - We always have a lot of room for improvement. During or after the meeting, be sure to solicit feedback from attendees on how the meeting was conducted. By incorporating their feedback, you can improve the next sessions, which shall be more engaging and fruitful as they are defined for the audience.