



# Planning Your Meeting: Agendas Can Be the Answer

By Cindy Ramagos

Like deadlines, meetings are another great organizational tool that can be misused. Many meetings end up siphoning away precious time and offering no value in return.

*The key to a beneficial meeting is a concise agenda.*

## Agendas Are a Real Time Saver

What happens when you go to the grocery store without a shopping list? Running a meeting is no different. Nobody likes attending meetings: We're all so busy and meetings tend to steal precious chunks of time from our already frazzled day.

Meetings are a necessary evil but that does not mean we can't try to make them less evil. The best way to do this is by always creating a meeting agenda. An agenda:

- Defines the meeting's purpose and itemizes the issues to be covered.
- Keeps the meeting from straying off course.
- Gives everyone a goal to shoot for, namely, getting through the list as efficiently as possible.

*A meeting without an agenda is like a basketball game without hoops: you just run up and down the court but you never really get anything accomplished.*



*Affiliate Leaders at the SECA Conference: A Meeting to Promote Networking and Information Sharing*

Make an agenda, distribute it in advance and stick to it. In this way you can protect at least a few more precious minutes from being shredded by the "meeting monster."

As you develop your agenda, be sure that you always incorporate these items.

1. The meeting subject and purpose.
2. Agenda topics.
3. Process to be used for discussion and action for each topic.
4. Time allocated for each topic.
5. Person to address the topic.
6. Instructions for participants to prepare ahead of time if there's something that will require advance preparation.
7. Logistics—date, time, specific location.

Source: "SMART GOALS," [www.bakercommunications.com](http://www.bakercommunications.com)

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# Time Management Ideas

by Cindy Ramagos

We all know that person who seems to manage to get it all done, time and time again. *If you're not that person, do you ever wonder why you can't seem to make it all happen?* Are you stressed because many things are still waiting for your attention, and you just don't seem to have time to focus on the task at hand, much less on the other things that are waiting in the wings? **Don't despair, you're not alone!**

More than likely, that person who's always on top of things has learned some good time management skills along the way. These are skills that can be learned and ones that can make your life more stress free and productive. This applies not only to your workplace but also to any of your volunteer activities. ***If you're serving in a leadership role within your association, effectively juggling family, work and your association responsibilities requires good time management***

**skills.** Here are some tips and things to consider:

- Revamp your process for managing time and work.
- Expedite work projects and track progress.
- Adhere to self imposed and external deadlines.
- Gain control of e-mail.
- Simplify your follow-up process.
- Improve your management skills by effectively planning and managing your tasks.
- Prioritize and implement a "To Do" list.
- Limit distractions and interruptions.
- Do housekeeping in your work area.

- Review goals and then determine if the activities are time and goal oriented.
- Implement effective resource management to meet the goals (people and funds).

If you're practicing good time management, you'll make the best use of your time with these simple steps.

- **Delegate**—What tasks can be shifted to someone else? You don't have to do everything.
- **Say NO**—If you take on more than you can do, no one is pleased with the result.
- **Stop** trying to rescue everything and everyone.
- **Focus** on one thing at a time.
- **Limit** interruptions that distract you.

Source: "SMART GOALS,"  
www.bakercommunications.com

## Prioritizing Your Tasks by Susan Carrigan

Need help prioritizing how much time to devote to various tasks, as well as when to tackle a task? The experts say to divide your tasks into four categories to set priorities and decide what to tackle first.

**Important and Urgent**—Crisis mode, extremely pressing problems, deadline driven projects, meetings and preparations. These items should be taken care of right away and be given the time necessary to complete them. **These are the tasks high on your priority list.**

**Important But Not Urgent**—These tasks would include preparation, pre-

vention, values clarification, planning, relationship building, true recreation and empowerment. These tasks are all important but not urgent. **Devote your time to these tasks when you have finished important and urgent tasks.**

**Urgent But Not Important**—Interruptions, some phone calls, some e-mails, some reports, some meetings, many proximate, pressing matters, many popular activities. They may not be as important but they have time deadlines. **Take the time to deal with these issues but do not spend a lot of time on them.**

**Not Important and Not Urgent**—These tasks would include busy work, trivia, some phone calls, time wasters, "escape activities" and irrelevant e-mail. **Very little time should be spent on these tasks and only after all of the above tasks have been accomplished.**

***If you keep these categories in mind, you can have more productive days, and spend your time more wisely.***

Sources: Kenneth Zeigler, *Organizing for Success*, 2d ed., The McGraw Hill Companies, USA, 2008.

Kate Williams, *The Performance Manager*, Cognos Press, 2004.

# Effective Delegation

by Julia Teska, Ph.D., East Central University, Oklahoma

**So, you've decided to share the load and delegate?**

## Keep These Points in Mind When Delegating

1. Unless you can visualize and articulate what you want in terms of results, the process will fail.
2. As a supervisor, you must stretch the capabilities of your staff. Repeatedly assigning the same tasks to the same people because they do them well does not foster professional development.
3. As a supervisor, you must let others know how the assigned tasks fit into the program's goals and major objectives and to what extent the person is empowered to act on the program's behalf. Without this information, it is difficult for staff to operate independently.
4. The delegation should never be revoked. Doing so undermines what a supervisor wishes to establish: initiative.
5. The supervisor should never accept unfinished or unsatisfactory work. Such acceptance communicates tolerance of low standards.
6. Completed work should be evaluated against the results that the supervisor wanted to achieve, not against the way in which the

supervisor would have achieved them.

7. A satisfactory outcome should be recognized. Many delegations fail because hard work goes unappreciated and forgotten. At the very least, the appreciation of a successful task completed should be rewarded with the chance to be given another challenging task at a future date.

## Effective Delegation Functions

- **Planning and Goal Setting**—Goals must be clearly stated and communicated. A firm, but flexible, plan needs to incorporate goals and objectives within time frames, resource allocations and quality standards.
- **Responsibility and Authority**—Responsibility (accountability for objectives, resources and tasks) and authority (power to obtain resources and manage decisions) must be distributed to delegates equal to the size of the project or task.
- **Negotiation**—What the delegate can do and what the manager expects must be worked out into a delegated agreement that both can accept and plan toward. Differences in expectation, progress and results should be worked out in advance.

- **Management by Exception**—Agreement must be reached between the supervisor and staff as to what constitutes an exception (unforeseen problem or opportunity), when the supervisor will intervene and when the staff person should request the supervisor's intervention.
- **Consultation and Coaching**—For everyone involved, know when and how to offer help, accept help, provide help and understand that by giving and accepting help, the delegation process or the independence of either the supervisor or staff is not adversely affected.
- **Review and Control**—Create an understanding between everyone involved in advance and as part of the plan, how designated information is going to be identified, what feedback mechanisms are going to be determined and put into place, and how corrective decisions are going to be managed.

**Go to page 4 of this newsletter for a checklist that will assist you in learning how to effectively delegate and successfully complete a project.**

Sources: Harvard School of Business Press, *Delegating Work*, Boston, 2008.

Donna Genett, *If You Want It Done Right, You Don't Have to Do It Yourself!: The Power of Effective Delegation*, Quill Driver Books, 2004.

## Want to Read More?

- *Time Management from the Inside Out: The Foolproof System for Taking Control of Your Schedule—and Your Life*, Julie Morgenstern, 2004
- *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*, David Allen, 2002
- *Time Management in an Instant*, Keith Bailey, 2008
- *Time Management for the Creative Person: Right-Brain Strategies for Stopping Procrastination, Getting Control of the Clock and Calendar, and Freeing Up Your Time and Your Life*, Lee T. Silber, 1998
- *The 25 Best Time Management Tools and Techniques: How to Get More Done Without Driving Yourself Crazy*, Pamela Dodd and Doug Sundheim, 2005
- *The Time Trap*, Alec Mackenzie and Pat Nickerson, 2009



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*Promoting Quality Care and Education for  
Young Children and Their Families*

*The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:*

- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*
- *Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families.*

*SECA is a "Voice for Southern Children"*

[www.southernearlychildhood.org](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org)

## A Delegation Checklist

The successful delegation process goes through five phases.

### Number 1: Preparation Phase

- Specify what needs to be done and by whom as laid out in the project goals and objectives.
- Decide to whom the task will be delegated.
- Consider everyone's abilities, knowledge, interests, experience, attitudes, confidence and developmental goals.
- Consider everyone's current work load and the types of tasks or projects they are currently working on.

### Number 2: Planning Phase

- Brief everyone involved in the project and formulate a plan of action.

- Ask staff to prepare a plan of how the task could be accomplished and to specify obstacles they anticipate as well as ways to deal with these obstacles.
- Establish a meeting time to discuss the staff's ideas and determine how long the meeting will last.
- Describe the project clearly, including how the project fits into the larger scheme of things.
- Arrange for the meeting to take place.

### Number 3: Discussion Phase

- Review the project objectives with the staff and discuss ideas about how to proceed.
- Discuss how much follow-up to expect and establish checkpoints.

### Number 4: Audit Phase

- Monitor the progress of the delegation and make adjustments in response to unforeseen problems or challenges. Make sure all of the needed materials and resources are available.
- Discuss progress at designated checkpoints and offer encouragement.

### Number 5: Appreciation Phase

- Accept the completed project and acknowledge the staff's efforts.
- Show an interest in the results.
- Accept your own accountability.
- Review and determine what has been learned.

Source: Robert Heller, *How to Delegate*, DK Publishing, New York, 1998.