
Welcome to

"Meetings ... not more Bloody Meetings"

IHM Management Development Network

March 2008

Dawn Broadberry



For further information, please contact:
dawn@broadberryconsulting.co.uk

Workshop overview



- “Am I late...? “Do I have to be here?” ... Do these words sound familiar?
- Do you have a bulldog, frog or hippopotamus hiding in your meetings making life interesting?
- Leave this short, practical workshop with an understanding of people at meetings and how to manage them and the process more effectively



Are you lonely ???

Don't like working on your own ?
Hate making decisions ?

Then call a MEETING !!

You can
SEE people
DRAW flowcharts
FEEL important
FORM subcommittees
IMPRESS your colleagues
MAKE meaningless recommendations
ALL on COMPANY TIME !!!!



MEETINGS

THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK.

Meetings – to get us started...

- What do you like/not like about meetings?
- What would the consequence be of not holding some of your meetings/not attending others?
- What 'kind' of people (i.e. late, rude, quiet, fidgety etc) come to your meetings?

Stage One: Plan



- Important questions:
 - “What is this meeting intended to achieve?”, “What would the consequence be if we didn’t hold it?”
 - Unless there is a clear need for the meeting, it might be a waste of everyone’s time...

- Be clear why you need the meeting and list the subjects as follows:
 - For Information
 - For Discussion
 - For Decision

Stage 2: Inform



- Make sure everyone knows exactly what is being discussed, why and what you want from the discussion
- Anticipate what people and information may be needed and make sure they're there
- Having the right number of people and the correct people are essential – and they should be properly informed and prepared before they come so that everyone can use their time as effectively as possible
- The value and success of a meeting can be threatened if too many people are present (between 4 - 7 is generally ideal, 10 is tolerable, and 12 is getting to be outside the limit)

Stage 3: Prepare



- Prepare the logical sequence of items on the agenda
- Look for connections between different items and arrange them in the necessary order
- Prepare the time allocation for each item on the basis of its importance, not its urgency
- All items should be thought about in advance. Simply listing 'Any Other Business' on the agenda as a catch-all is an invitation to waste everyone's time! Use this only if something urgent or unforeseen crops up (that was not in time for the agenda and could not be held over to another meeting)

Stage 4: Structure and control



- Take the evidence stage before the interpretation stage, and that before the action stage, and stop people jumping ahead or going back over old ground
- At the end of each agenda item, the chair should give a brief summary of what has been agreed (and ask people to confirm they will do it)

Stage 5: Summarise



- Summarise all decisions and record them straight away, with the name of the person responsible for any action
- Minutes or action notes?
- Often there is no need for formal minutes and Action Notes are more relevant. They are much easier to complete (and to make useful) than minutes

Minutes or Action Notes?

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE
1			
2			
3			

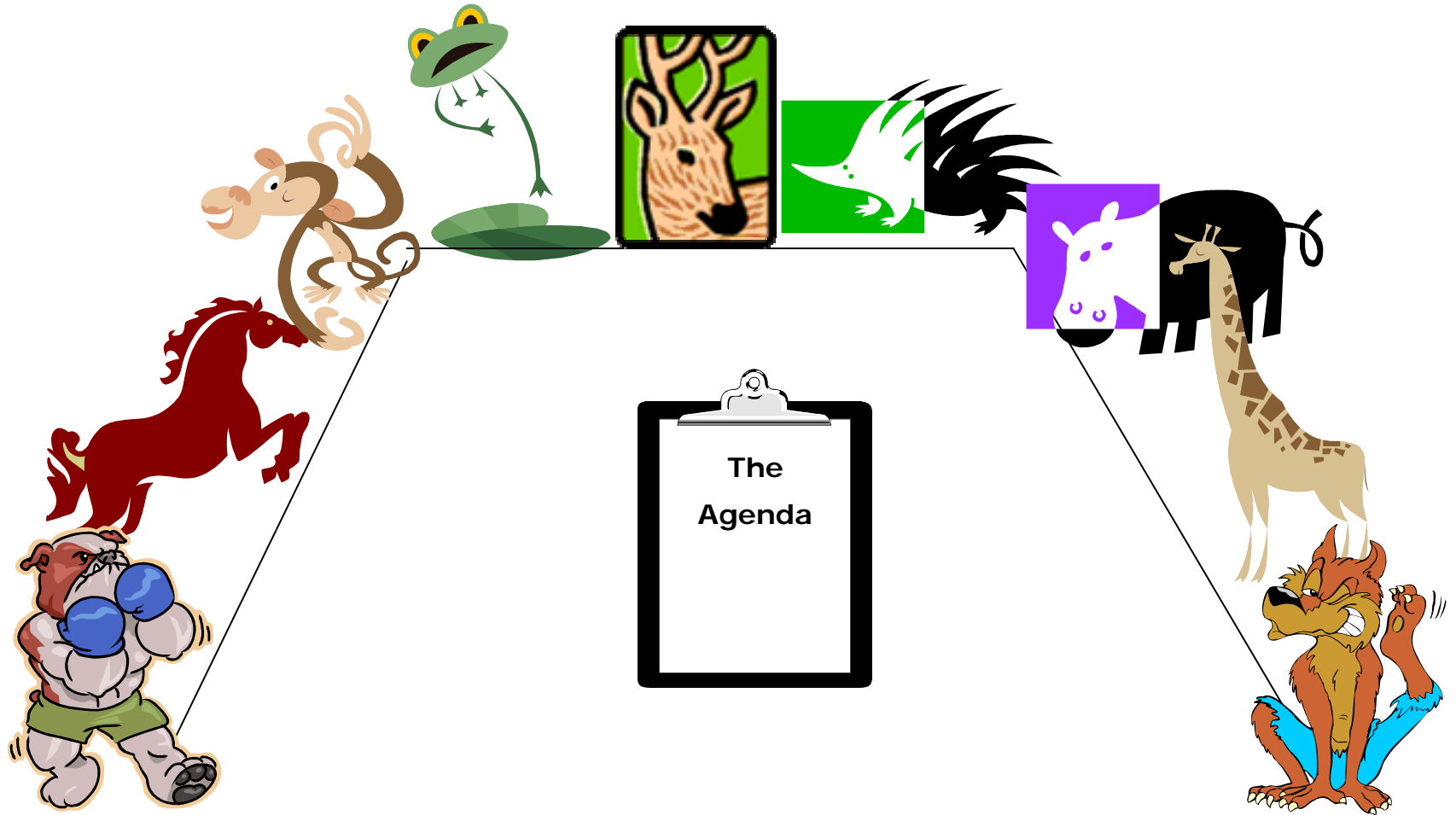
The Chairperson

- Be on time – Start on time
- Start by briefly reviewing the purpose and objectives as well as any ground rules
- Be business-like
- Be firm but fair
- Watch and listen

Be ready for disruption – the signs

- Arrive late / leave early
- Engage in private conversations
- Keep talking – even when they have nothing to say
- Never volunteer for jobs
- Criticise others freely
- Keep looking at watch, interrupt, try to skip forward
- Create diversions such as dropping things, passing round sandwiches, making tea
- Re-open discussions not on the agenda
- Fall asleep

The Group Members As the Chairman Sees Them



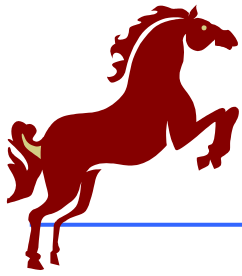
The Bulldog (Quarrelsome Type)



- Aggressive - always wants to be the winner
- May lack insight and not have a wide enough understanding of what is going on
- Tend to monopolise the discussion

Possible techniques:

- Use other members to explain points and bring them round
- Marginalize their contribution: stop asking for their input, keep them on your left ("dead corner") and pretend not to hear them
- Use phrases like "Thank you for your contribution. Let's listen to what others think about this"
- When they make a positive contribution, bring them back into the discussion



The Horse (Positive Type)

- Energetic and enthusiastic who will be very useful - tap into their knowledge and judgement
- Confident and intelligent, but can tend to dominate by talking too much

Possible techniques:

- Ask them to summarise so the rest of the group can comment
- Ensure other members don't feel inferior by encouraging their contributions as well
- Consider agreeing with the group that everyone contributes one idea in turn and then listens to other members until their turn comes around again

The Artful Monkey (“Know All”)

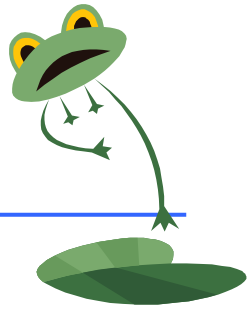


- Have a wealth of theories and theoretical knowledge
- May not be as grounded in good judgement or experience

Possible techniques:

- Use them to explain how things work at present
- If they describe a theory which is unclear, ask them to explain it so the whole group understands
- Encourage others to ask for explanations

The Frog (“Blabbermouth”)



- Tends to talk too much
- Tendency to become irrelevant

Possible techniques:

- Thank them for their contribution, but remind them of the topic under discussion at present
- Move the topic to another group member for their comments
- Pre-agree a limit for how long people can talk

The Gazelle (Shy Type)



- Timid and retiring, but may have a significant contribution to make and important knowledge or experience
- Lacking in confidence and self-belief

Possible techniques:

- Start with warm up exercises
- Ask for their comments where you are aware of their skills or knowledge
- Ensure that you encourage their contributions by giving positive feedback when they speak e.g. "thanks very much – that is very helpful", "I was unaware of that"

The Hedgehog (Uncooperative, “Rejecting”)

- Knowledgeable and ambitious with good skills but sceptical of change and anything new
- Not inclined to be helpful - may prefer to work as an individual rather than as part of the group
- Assumes other members should have the knowledge they have

Possible techniques:

- Ignore the negativity and concentrate on their knowledge
- Thank them for their contribution and show it's valued
- Identify parts of their argument which coincide with the group's in order to help them move towards agreement with the majority
- Set a ground rule in advance that ideas should be accepted without destructive criticism

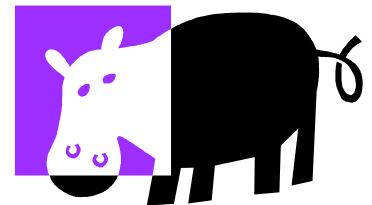


The Hippopotamus (Thick-Skinned, Uninterested)

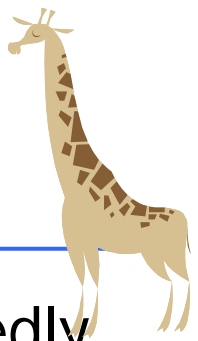
- Lacking in interest and motivation
- May take an inflexible attitude towards the ideas of others in the group

Possible techniques:

- Involve them in the discussion with direct questioning so they have to contribute
- Find examples of their job in which they have an interest and which may be relevant to the discussion
- Make sure they explain the reasons for rejecting the ideas of others



The Giraffe (“Stiff Neck”)



- Appears aloof; can take offence easily and unexpectedly
- Gives the impression they know better than others
- Does a lot of listening but may be unwilling to contribute

Possible techniques:

- Treat them with respect and courtesy and encourage them to participate
- Ensure they are asked to contribute on familiar territory
- Acknowledge contributions which are not relevant - “Yes, I can see how this works in particular circumstances, but this would not be relevant here”

The Fox (Persistent Questioner)

- Tends to play “power games” and may well be threatened by other group members or the chair
- Their technique is to try to trap others into making misjudgements



Possible techniques:

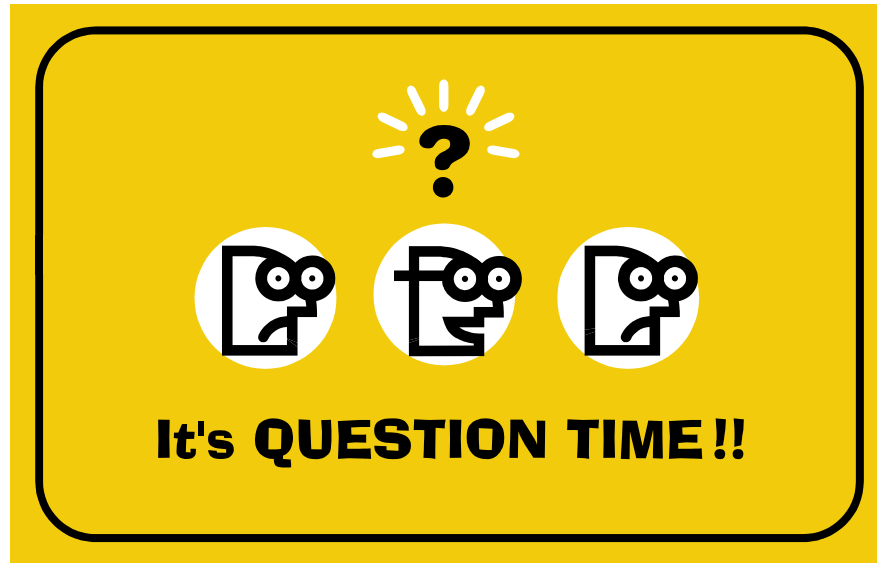
- Think through the responses this person may have in advance of the meeting so you are prepared
- Remain calm and unprovoked – do not “take the bait”
- Pass their comments back to the group for their thoughts rather than placing yourself in an exposed position

Techniques For Chairing Meetings

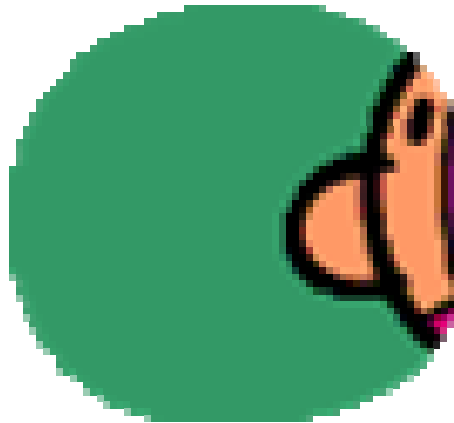
The Three Laws of Meetings:

Unite the Group
Focus the Group
Mobilise the Group





-
- Thank you for all your contributions



- Enjoy the rest of your day!