

The Meeting Toolkit

A Job Aid for Better Meetings

- 1 Determine the Need
- 2 Plan the Meeting and Prepare the Agenda
- 3 Conduct the Meeting
- 4 What Comes Next

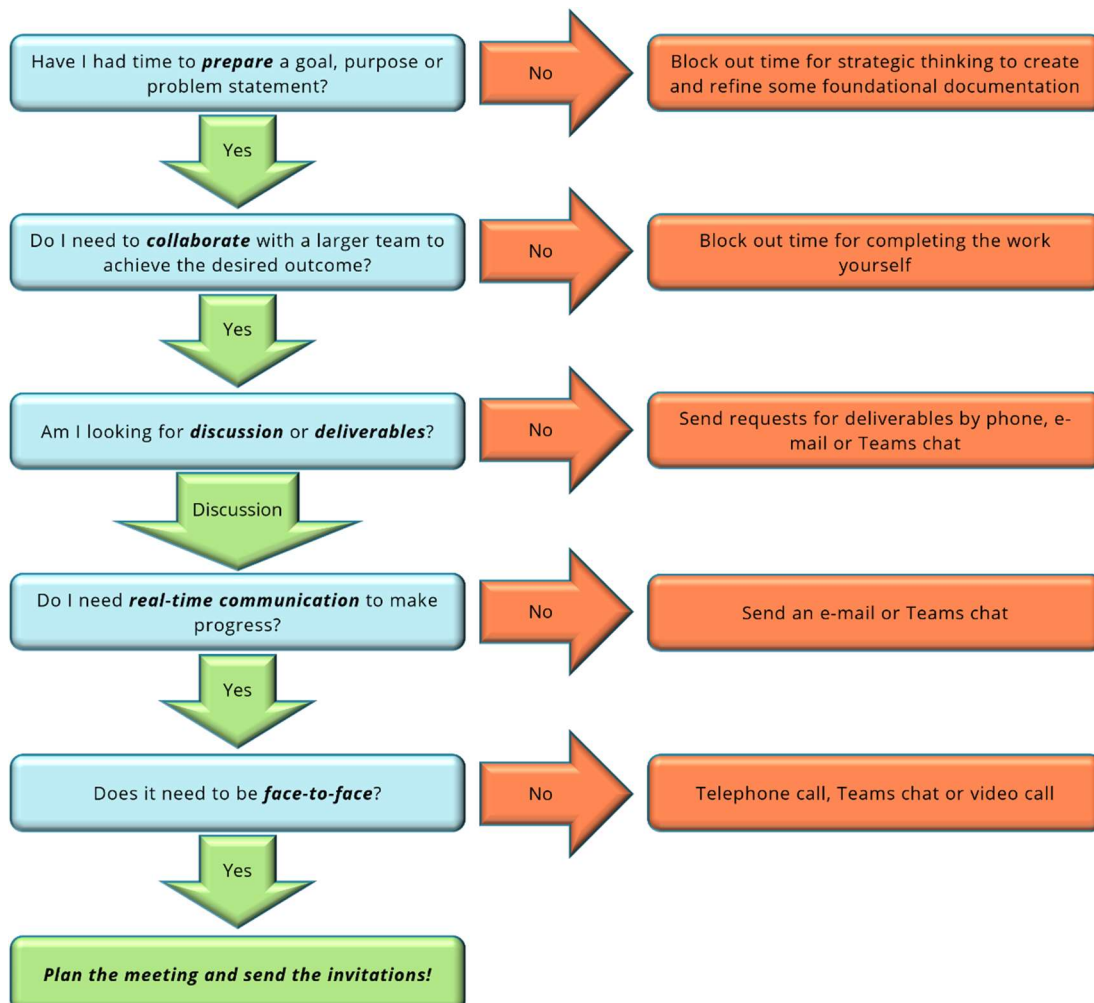
Hint – Repeat Steps 1-3



1 Determine the Need

An ad hoc group meeting is a formal gathering of designated participants, oriented around a specific purpose, goal or problem statement. Ad hoc group meetings can be a great way to address a particular issue, meet and connect with teammates, generate fantastic new ideas and make decisions based on shared understanding . . . But they also can crowd and overwhelm our calendars. A decision tree can be a helpful way to determine whether a group meeting is the right way to proceed. Before you send invitations to get a group together, take a minute to consider the following question.

Do I Need a Meeting?



2 Plan the Meeting and Prepare the Agenda

WHY. The very first question we need to answer is, why are we having this meeting? We need to provide a *goal, purpose or problem statement*. If we can articulate a measurable objective in the form of a goal, purpose or problem statement, we can help create a clearer understanding of the direction, relevant support and business need – our best answer to the most important question, **WHY**.

*It's best to avoid being too general such as "review quarterly results". Be more specific and include measurables such as "review first quarter length of stay results to establish plans for continued improvements".

WHAT. Once we've articulated the measurable goal, it's time to think about the **SCOPE**. We'll want to record our best guess at the likely outputs and the amount of work they might require to complete. This will help the group to focus the discovery and discussion process on those areas that are within range of measurable impact. This also is an opportunity to summarize any previous work, background or context for the work ahead.

WHO. Now we turn our attention to the **ATTENDEES**. We want to start with the required roles. Which departments and roles need to be represented for our meeting to make informed and impactful decisions? Once we have considered the roles, now we need to specify the roll call. Who is the correct person(s) needed to represent those departments, units and divisions? We're looking for the *subject matter experts (SMEs)** who can help us achieve positive growth and change through strategic conversations.

*Don't be afraid to reach out ahead of the meeting and touch base with those SMEs to make sure you have the right people involved and ensure they clearly understand the goal, purpose or problem statement. Some of them might have work to do in advance of your first meeting in order to present relevant data and discoveries!

There are *two specific roles* that need to be filled and identified every time your ad hoc group meeting convenes.

- 1 **The Moderator.** This can be the meeting organizer (you) and it also can rotate to any of the participants depending on their area of expertise. Rotating the moderator role can help keep the participants engaged, especially if the ad hoc group meeting needs to continue for an extended period. The important thing is that a single individual is identified as the moderator to serve in the capacity of keeping the conversation focused and respectful. *see below for a list of meeting guidelines*
2. **The Notetaker.** Everyone should be encouraged to take their own notes and there may be technologies that can assist by recording and even transcribing a written record, but a single individual should hold the responsibility for capturing the value of the ideas generated during the discussion and sharing those notes as part of the required action items that should be an output of every meeting.

WHEN. Scheduling the meeting isn't always easy. Microsoft Outlook and Teams both offer access to the scheduling assistant. The hope is to find a time that works for most of the participants. We often take a short cut and request a full hour for our meetings, but we should really cultivate a questioning attitude. Try to find the amount of time that truly fits the needs of the team. It's ok to look for increments that do not begin and end at the top of an hour.

All of this important work should be captured in the form of your **AGENDA**. An agenda is a framework used to conduct the meeting and make strategic decisions. Think of your agenda as the plan for that one meeting . . . The topics needed for discussion and the person responsible for leading that discussion. In addition to helping plan the meeting, the agenda also can be used to conduct the meeting and capture your notes or *meeting minutes*.

3 Conduct the Meeting

Before we begin, let's establish some meeting guidelines.

- Start and end all meetings on time.
- Start your meetings with a story, giving participants time to focus on our mission . . . To strengthen the health and wellbeing of all people in our communities.
- Disconnect. No smartphones, laptops or other devices unless presenting or note-taking.
- Treat everyone with respect. Interruptions happen but try to allow each participant the space to finish their thoughts.
- All participants should prepare and participate. It's so important to prepare and participate that you might even consider using the first few minutes simply to study any prepared documents.
- Stay focused on the agenda topics. Focused work will be more impactful. "Scope creep" can happen but you want to make sure it's only by consensus with the larger group.
- Take notes. This is healthcare and nothing happens unless we document!
- Your meeting is a collaborative space. Think of it like a sandbox. Before you build sandcastles, you need to fill the box with sand. You want to fill your collaborative space with the right people, tools, information and other inputs that you will need to identify gaps and generate a holistic view of the situation.

Invite

Collaboration begins as soon as you invite others to participate in the strategic conversation. Hopefully, you've captured all your preparation with a completed agenda. That agenda should be included with the invitation. You want to make sure all participants understand the WHO, WHAT, WHEN and WHY before everyone gathers for the meeting.

The agenda should break the meeting down into three stages: *discovery*, *discussion* and *decision*. Your invitation announces the start of the discovery phase. Each participant is a subject matter expert and should prepare for the meeting by preparing initial information, data and unique insights and understanding.

Any specific items to be presented or tasks to be completed before the meeting should be clearly identified. Your attendees should be able to easily see the initial information that will be shared with the group and know who will be responsible for sharing that information.

Include

In this phase, it'll be the moderator's responsibility to include the participants in the *discussion*. The moderator will want to start on time; welcome the participants and provide introductions; review the meeting agenda and clarify the goal, purpose, or problem statement; and review the meeting guidelines.

The notetaker will want to the main points of discussion. The moderator will manage the discussion by helping maintain focus on the stated purpose, promoting respect for the thoughts of the participants and keeping the meeting moving on time.

Inspire

A well-prepared and well-moderated meeting should lead the conversation from common ground to higher ground. Assumptions should be brought to the surface and tested against any available evidence. The goal here is to identify the real need(s), identify gaps and perspectives that haven't been addressed, and clarify remaining outstanding questions. Now the group is ready to make *decisions*.

The notetaker will want to carefully record and share these decisions. These decisions often appear in the form of action items. Using the following chart can simplify recording action items.

ACTION ITEM	OWNER	DUE DATE	NOTES

This chart is a great way to organize decisions into actionable items and engage the team in their completion. It also serves as the springboard for any follow-up discovery if/when the group decides to meet again.

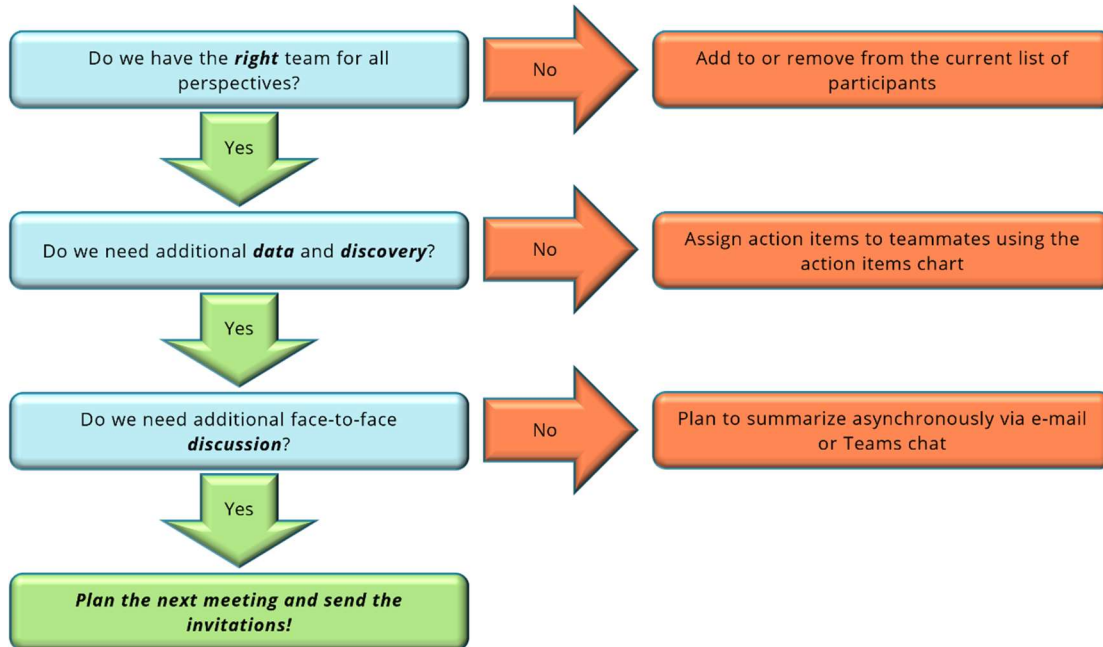
Remember, the first task listed on this chart should be for the notetaker is to share the meeting minutes with all the participants.

4 What Comes Next

Congratulations! You've just created a framework for a strategic conversation and led a group through the first cycle of discovery, discussion, and decision. But there's one more important decision for the group to make. Do we need to meet again?

To plan the next potential meeting, here is another useful decision tree.

Do We Need to Meet Again?



The ad-hoc group meeting is meant to be repeatable, but only as needed. That means you must start back at the top of this process and determine the new need. Your agenda is a living document. It can change as the needs of the group change, just remember to save and share each iteration of the document. This ensures the group will have an accurate record of all the important decisions along the way.

5 What If You've Been Invited to Someone Else's Meeting?

What happens when someone else has invited you to attend a meeting? Or maybe there's that one meeting that you've been invited to, but you don't know how to contribute, or worse, when it will end. Following is one more decision tree to help you.

Is This a Meeting I Should Attend?

