

Preparing for the Meeting...

- *Identify Meeting Outcomes:* What are the expectations and desired outcomes for the session? At the end of this meeting, what will have been accomplished that would make you say it was a blazing success?
- *Plan Logistics.* How long is the meeting (begin and end times)? Who are the appropriate stakeholders? Have you identified “the right people” to be in the room – those who need to be part of this session for the meeting and the work related to the meeting to be accomplished successfully? How many people will participate? How are meeting invitations being handled? Where will you meet? Will you provide food and beverages, and if so who will coordinate. Will you need audiovisual equipment? Is pre-work needed?

Designing the Meeting ...

- *Build Your “Form” to Follow “Function”:* Select processes best-suited to get the desired outcomes and create stakeholder engagement. Use a mix of presentations, individual work, small-group work, whole-group work, and pre-work. Determine how much time you will use for each agenda topic and process. Be realistic and relatively precise about timing, but build in some sluff time in case you need to work longer on an agenda item. Determine the questions you will explore. Create and use handouts and note-taking tools to guide the work and capture the results of discussion highlights in small-group work. Arrive early to set up your room. Create an agenda for you and the participants, and write notes or a guiding script for yourself and others with lead roles in the facilitation.
- *Design from the Inside Out.* Choose processes, tools, techniques, and activities in proportion to the importance of the outcomes. Generally, you should spend the most time on the most important outcomes.
- *Planning Time Rule-of-Thumb:* Spend between 1 and 3 times the length of the session on Preparing and Designing. (e.g. a 90-minute meeting requires between 90 min. and 4.5 hours to prepare.)

Facilitating the Meeting...

- *Set Clear Expectations:* Be clear about the decision-making process. Communicate up front who will make which decisions, how and when. Use this framework: 1. We don’t discuss. I decide. 2. We discuss. I decide. 3. We discuss. We decide. 4. We discuss. You decide. 5. We don’t discuss. You decide. “We,” at times, might be a subset of a larger group, for example, “We discuss and the Governance Team decides.”
- *Manage to the Agenda:* Create the understanding everyone in the meeting should be responsible for helping stick to the agenda. Get the group to own the meeting and the outcomes – even the process. Respect the time. Stay on track. Be mindful of doing the work planned and being aware when you drift too far from the agenda topics. Acknowledge when you are running over and decide about extending the time or ending the conversation; making a plan for continuing the work, and moving on with the agenda. Use a “parking lot” to capture important items that need to be addressed – just not in this moment.
- *Focus on the Right Issues:* Recognize when a discussion derails because you have lost the focus on the “interest” and you are being diverted by disagreements about particular solutions or positions.
- *Document the Work:* Capture in writing the action steps, ideas and highlights of discussions.
- *Make Plans:* Confirm next steps, action plans, deadlines, action-step owners.