No Just Another Meeting

There are certain steps to setting up and running a meeting that allow for the meeting to be meaningful and worthwhile. There are at least six stages that are important to ensuring a successful meeting.

I. **Know Why You Are Meeting:**
Clearly define what your purpose is in the meeting.
- Share information
- Make decisions and solve problems
- Delegate work or assignments
- Build your organization

II. **Plan and Organize prior to the Meeting:**
Establish a purpose for a specific meeting, including expectations and the desired outcomes.
Develop an Agenda which is clear regarding purpose, expectations and desired outcome.
Establish clear guidelines as to how the meeting will be conducted:
  - Parliamentary Procedure
  - Facilitation through a chair
Choose a space which is conducive for the type of meeting proposed.
Provide clear information regarding purpose, time, date, place, and duration of the meeting ahead of the actual meeting. (Agenda and Minutes)
Make sure that all information necessary for the meeting is printed and available for the meeting.
Include ideas and input from members in the design of the meeting.

III. **Running the Meeting:**
Start the meeting on time.
Be clear about how the meeting will be conducted. A posted list is helpful.
Establish some consensus from those attending, as to what will be acceptable behavior during the meeting.
Provide the agenda and other materials that will be necessary to conduct the meeting.
  - Always have extra materials even if these were sent out prior to the meeting.
Review the agenda at the meeting and gain consensus or a vote to adopt the agenda.
Ensure that time is considered as part of the guiding principle of the meeting. A clear time frame enables the members to keep on task.
Whenever possible, it is important to have a visual record of the meeting so everyone can see clearly what is taking place.
Have time at the end of the meeting to evaluate the meeting process and outcomes.
End the meeting on time.

IV. **Provide a clear Record of the Meeting:**
Ensure that there is a complete and accurate record of the actions and decisions that were made at the meeting.
Clearly identify any time lines or dates that were identified for completing decisions or reports along with who has been assigned responsibility.
Send out the record of the meeting or have it available at a mid point between the last and the next meeting, unless otherwise agreed upon.

V. **Follow up on Assignments, Tasks or Actions:**
Make sure that you are clear about what you have agreed to do following the meeting and complete them.
Contact those whom have accepted assignments or tasks, in person or a reminder note.

VI. **Evaluate the Meeting and Plan the Next Meeting:**
Take time to review the meeting process.
Note any particular problems and what could be done in planning the next meeting to alleviate them from reoccurring.
Begin establishing the purpose, expectations, and desire outcomes for the next meeting.

**IMPORTANT:**

Time spent in planning equals the time spent in the meeting.

The more participation allowed in a meeting the more ownership of the outcomes takes place.

Never expect anyone to do more than you.

Always appreciate and give acknowledgement to the efforts of others.

The less you control meetings the more output and action is taken.