

VALUE OF MEETINGS.

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"I'm a busy business owner and manager. I'm too busy to take the time to meet with my staff on a regular basis. I don't consider that meeting regularly will be of any benefit anyway and well it takes up valuable time that I just don't have. What value does a formal meeting offer me anyway?" Sound familiar?

This was me up until a few years ago. Because I was in the office with the same people discussing projects and 'work stuff' daily, interacting with the them through the normal working environment I didn't understand how effective a formally conducted meeting could be and in fact is. Not until it was explained to me through 'Mylyfe'.



For over 12 years I had never once had a formal meeting with any of my team. For over 12 years I was a technician absorbed within the business looking after the 'now' issues. For over 12 years I had been missing opportunities not captured through any type of formal process. For over 12 years I was caught up in the 'doing the do' not planning a structure and truly inviting my team to contribute in what we were doing and where we would like to be heading.

When the concept of formal meetings was presented to me my first thought was why does a small business like mine need to hold meetings. Meetings are for much bigger businesses than mine and more for the corporate world. Meetings will add no value to my business and anyway were doing ok. How wrong I was.



Formal meetings are invaluable for any size business, even as small as a two person partnership. Formal meetings held consistently on a regular basis create a sense of structure within any organisation big and small. What do we talk about? Every member of any team is employed for their skills and talents and all members can contribute true value in all

areas of your business development if asked to contribute. Why is it then, in most cases they don't? Because they are not asked. As the business owner or manager, it is my responsibility to initiate these meetings and ensure they are conducted on a regular basis. How do I do this?

Providing there's some form of system within my organisation, it is easy to ensure the meetings happen. Without a system, it is easy for the meetings to be missed or forgotten and soon the habit is lost and we roll on as we once did 'doing the do' as the business suffers. When I was first introduced to the concept of formal meetings within my business I truly struggled with the notion that this was a value added activity.



I knew it was important to hold these meetings but I really was uncomfortable asking my team to do something that was foreign to them and to me. The first group of meetings were never held on a regular basis, they were never properly structured and they were certainly met with suspicion. As I persisted, the meetings started to become more regular. As I and the team became more comfortable with the concept, the meetings truly started to add value to our business, team development and growth.



Over more recent times we have implemented a few styles of meetings all with a specific purpose. A few tips I would like to share with you to make it easier for you to ensure the meetings happen and continue to happen are as follows...

1. Regularity

Scheduling the same time and day for each type of meeting makes it real easy to keep it regular. A simple entry in your diary for the whole year will ensure that time is booked in before any other appointments.

2. Consistency

With the meetings now being held on a regular basis it is very important that they are consistent. Following a meeting template is an easy way to retain consistency and structure.

3. Frequency

I am a firm believer that more, shorter meetings are much better than a few big meetings. Frequency assists with habits forming within the work environment. If too much time has lapsed between meetings many issues within the business can arise and not be addressed before it's too late.

4. Short and sharp

Work to the template and don't allow the meeting to drag on. This is where most meetings fail and don't survive the duration. Address the topics that meeting is to cover and close it as soon as practical. A great way



to achieve this is to conduct the meeting standing. We have adopted this for a couple of our meeting types as it promotes a sense of urgency not necessarily captured in a boardroom style meeting.

Within our business we now conduct four types of meetings, "four??? Why four?" I hear you ask. Each meeting has a purpose and I'm proud to say I'm not strictly involved in all of them. The four meeting types we conduct, are designed to harness all aspect of our business, including and very importantly addressing the needs of the team. Let me explain these meetings in detail.

Daily Tool Box Meetings

These are short sharp meetings conducted by the team designed to capture the activity for the day, review the activity from yesterday and recognise individual performance. These meetings only go for around 7 to 10 minutes, they are run by the team and are daily.



Weekly Team Meetings

These weekly meetings are designed to capture team goals for that week. These may consist of projects to be completed to keep us on track for achieving our monthly turnover. Systems within the business that can be refined or created to continually improve the running of our business and fun challenges set by the team, such as our tidy desk award,

previously mentioned in an earlier article. These meetings run for 20 to 30mins on the same day each week, at the same time and are chaired by a different team member weekly.

Monthly Team/business Meetings

At the beginning of each month we discuss our big goals for the month allowing the other meetings to keep us on track. This meeting incorporates the weekly meeting for that week. This meeting runs for approximately 45 to 60mins.

Monthly One-on-one Meetings

I have identified these as possibly the most valuable meetings for individual development. They are personal and ask specific questions for the individual. We generally keep these meetings to around 15 to 25mins, however it is dependant on the individual and what is happening within the business at the time of the meeting. So, more time may have to be allocated to ensure the one-on-one meeting fulfils it's objectives.



There is much more I will ad about meetings in future articles and their true value within any business. There are many different forms and everyone has an opinion as to how they should be run. My advise is that regardless of weather you use a template developed by someone else or write your own, by following the simple suggestions you will see great results from implementing this simple tool and the biggest, most important rule is... JUST DO IT.

