



## SENIC Battlecards

### Effective Meetings

*Running a good meeting is something that every administrative professional must master. Here are some great tips for running good meetings.*

You schedule them because communication is important to your business. Yet more often than not, you leave them feeling like you've just wasted an hour of your life. Wouldn't it be great if there was a way to guarantee that your meetings would be productive every time? The key to effective meetings is for you to remember that you are the one in the driver's seat. Here are some tips to get you started:

**Set an Agenda.** Most meetings are doomed from the start because they lack purpose and focus. Unless you have a solid agenda, your meeting time will be filled with meaningless banter and chit-chat. Try to get attendees in the habit of communicating agenda items to you at least a day before the meeting occurs. Then compile those items in a written agenda and distribute it to the meeting participants in advance to make sure everyone is on the same page.

**Establish Time Limits.** It's usual for meetings to have a predetermined time limit. However, it's also not unusual for meetings to go over this time limit, despite the best efforts of the participants. The trick to staying on schedule is setting time limits not only for the meeting, but also for individual agenda items. As the meeting convener, your job is to keep things moving using these limits as your guide.

**Assign a Note-taker.** Effective meetings result in a comprehensive record of the meeting's discussions and decisions, as well as a list of who was (and wasn't) in attendance. But good notes don't happen by chance. Assign a note-taker (someone other than yourself) who will be responsible for taking notes, typing them, and distributing them to the meeting participants in a timely manner.

**Stay on Topic.** When conversation strays, your job is to rein it in and bring the discussion back to the items listed on the agenda. Some people have a hard time doing this because they don't want to play the role of a taskmaster. But think about it this way: In business, time really is money and every wasted moment represents pennies rolling out the door of your company. Don't be a martinet, but don't be afraid to assert control, either.

**Communicate Action Items.** Even if you cover all your agenda items, results are the only real evidence of an effective meeting. The most effective method for tracking results is to wrap-up the meeting by discussing action items and communicating them via the meeting notes. At the next meeting, review your progress and make adjustments as needed. If no progress has been made, you may need to either reassess the purpose of your meetings or step-up your efforts to hold your staff accountable for their follow-up responsibilities.



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