

Additional meeting formats

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Are your executive committee meetings inefficient? Too long? Or even boring? One way to make them more efficient and more interesting is to choose something other than the standard meeting format every time. After all, meetings can also be exciting and can contribute to positive, enjoyable working relationships. Here are a few alternative formats.

Check-in

Check-ins are short meetings, online or in person, that take between 15 and 20 minutes. The purpose is to offer all team members an overview of the progress that has been made, answer questions, and support one another with tips and advice. Like other meetings, check-ins also require preparation and should be moderated.

A *check-in* always follows the same, simple procedure: every participant offers a brief update on the following:

1. What they are working on right now
2. What they are struggling with
3. What they'd like help with
4. Questions/comments

A *check-in* works well online, for example with a Miro whiteboard or just a video conference in which the most important points are recorded using keywords. Naturally, this kind of meeting can also be held in person with a noticeboard or a sheet of kraft paper with Post-It notes.

In addition to the fact that they help you keep track of what's happening, the advantage of short, regular meetings is that they allow you to keep in touch with each other and quickly and easily support one another.

Workshop

Workshops are used for planning, developing and making decisions. *Workshops* serve the following purposes:

- Gathering new ideas, such as for ways to organise the next executive committee meeting
- Developing fundamentals, for example the association's mission statement, strategies
- Making good decisions

Workshops work best as in-person meetings because this makes it easier for a shared energy to develop that encourages new ideas. Naturally, however, you can also hold workshops virtually, especially right now where most people have gotten used to attending online events.

The key to a *workshop* is visualisation: recording the ideas discussed either in writing or with drawings/symbols on cards, sheets of paper, flip charts, etc. This helps to reduce misunderstandings, uncover any mistakes or gaps, and also serves as the minutes for the meeting.

Ideally, in a workshop, everyone involved is able to contribute their ideas and help develop possible solutions. Approaches are then evaluated according to certain fixed criteria and a decision is made collectively.

Of course, *workshops* need to be prepared for and properly moderated. Moderation also ensures that the most important decisions, next steps, responsibilities and deadlines are discussed and recorded.

One advantage of *workshops* is that the team can concentrate on a specific topic and only work on that issue, generally outside of their normal day-to-day work. This makes it possible to focus on projects and work on them more effectively or to develop new guidelines or strategies.

Get-it-done session

Rather than working alone at different locations, it can be liberating to come together every once in a while and work on something together in a group. You're meeting up to actually get something done together instead of "just" talking about it. The main advantage: personal who are not part of the executive committee or the team in question or even external stakeholders can be invited to participate in a get-it-done session. What's important is that everyone contributes based on their skills.

This type of meeting should also be moderated and prepared for accordingly. Participants should receive an invitation well in advance with the date, time and information about which task(s) will be completed together at the meeting.

The meeting then runs as follows:

1. What do we want to achieve today?
2. What will we do first? What will we do next?
3. Where do we need to wait?
4. What has been completed? Let's celebrate those things!

The best way to structure a get-it-done session is a Kanban board on which you create columns that visualise the aforementioned sections and then position the tasks in their respective columns. In this way, everyone can clearly see what's happening, what's already finished and what is planned.

The goal should be to have a finished "package" by the end of the get-it-done session. This way, everyone will be satisfied and there won't be any loose ends that need to be dealt with later.

Associations can use get-it-done sessions to plan events, prepare social media posts for the next month, take care of administrative work or prepare mailers, among other things.

Get-it-done sessions are generally in-person events. Depending on the type of tasks to be completed, however, they can also be held virtually.

The advantages of *get-it-done sessions* are that work actually gets done and is no longer on your desk. Many people enjoy working in a group, and this kind of event allows everyone to optimally deploy their skills. *Get-it-done sessions* help to build team spirit!

Retrospective

Retrospectives are periodic reviews that help you and your team learn. Many people will already be familiar with this type of meeting, which is also referred to as an annual review, a look back, a debriefing or “lessons learned”. The idea behind it is that we would all be much smarter if we regularly took the time to reflect and write down what we have learned, even smaller, relatively unimportant things.

Retrospectives cover the following aspects:

1. What have I/we learned?
2. What would I/we do differently next time?
3. That was great! This is something we can all be proud of!
4. This is something we can improve in the future

Retrospectives should also be prepared for and moderated. They can be held in person or virtually.

The advantage of retrospectives is not only that they allow individuals or teams to keep learning, but also that the recorded results of the retrospectives can be helpful for other teams who are tackling the same issues.

Furthermore, retrospectives are part of establishing enjoyable, effective working relationships.

More information about this topic

Videos:

- Meeting formats / collaborating well and enthusiastically, <https://www.vitaminb.ch/>
- Get-it-done session / collaborating well and enthusiastically, <https://www.vitaminb.ch/>
- Kanban / collaborating well and enthusiastically, <https://www.vitaminb.ch/>

Work aids: <https://www.vitaminb-e.ch/tools/work-aids/>

- Executive committee meeting
- Strategy
- Collaborative decisions
- Chairing meetings
- Kanban