

# EFFECTIVE MEETINGS WORKSHOP

Presented by

**Jack Patterson**  
**Tilt Communications Ltd.**  
Email: [jackpatterson@shaw.ca](mailto:jackpatterson@shaw.ca)  
Phone: (403)208-3336

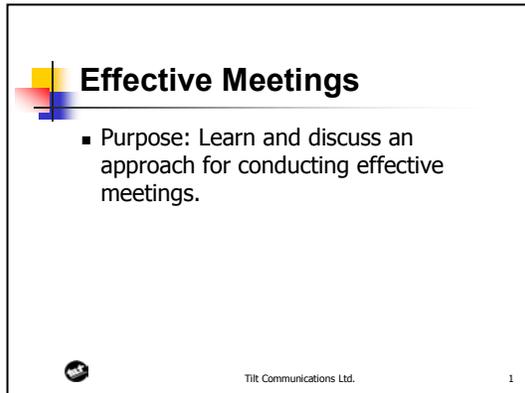
For

ALBERTA LIBRARY CONFERENCE  
BUILDING BRIDGES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose .....	1
Objectives .....	1
Sample Ground Rules .....	1
Should you have a Meeting? .....	2
Meeting Types .....	3
Meeting Planning .....	4
Planning Components .....	5
Desired Outcomes .....	5
Context Analysis .....	6
Stakeholder Analysis .....	6
Logistics & Room set-up .....	7
Agenda .....	8
Roles & Functions .....	9
Decision Making .....	10
Hand of 5 (Consensus Decision Making) .....	10
Interventions .....	10
Action Plan .....	11
Example Action Plan .....	11
Work Sheet for meeting planning .....	12
Evaluation .....	13
Example Evaluation .....	13
Follow – Up .....	14
Selected Resources .....	14

## Purpose



**Effective Meetings**

- Purpose: Learn and discuss an approach for conducting effective meetings.

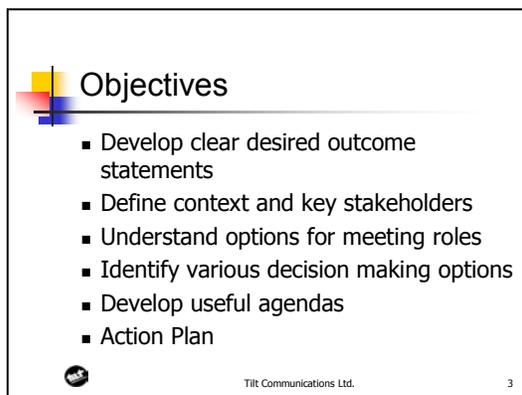
 Tilt Communications Ltd. 1

Participants will hear about ways to effectively plan meetings.

Effective planning results in effective meetings.

Meetings can be one-on-one. They can also be with large teams.

## Objectives



**Objectives**

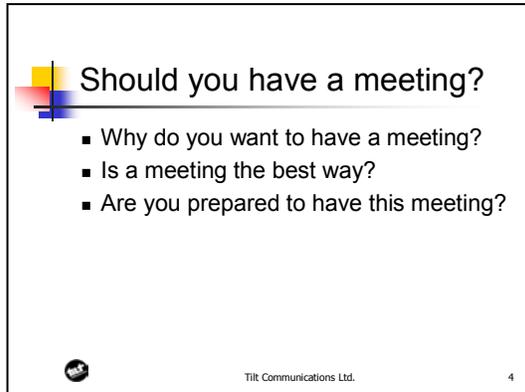
- Develop clear desired outcome statements
- Define context and key stakeholders
- Understand options for meeting roles
- Identify various decision making options
- Develop useful agendas
- Action Plan

 Tilt Communications Ltd. 3

## Sample Ground Rules

- We're all colleagues - let's respect each other
- It's okay to disagree
- Listen as an ally
- Everyone participates, no one person dominates.
- Honour time limits
- Have Fun

## Should you have a Meeting?



**Should you have a meeting?**

- Why do you want to have a meeting?
- Is a meeting the best way?
- Are you prepared to have this meeting?

Tilt Communications Ltd. 4

Is a meeting the best way:

- Is there a better way to accomplish this task?
- Would a phone call or a written communication accomplish this task as well, or better than a face-to-face meeting?
- Is the subject matter so confidential or secret that it can't be shared with some group members?
- Is the subject trivial?
- Is there so much anger and hostility in the group that people need time to calm down before they can begin to work collaboratively?

Are you prepared for the meeting:

- Do you have a clear desired outcome in mind?
- Do you have adequate data to achieve the desired outcome?
- Have you thought out what needs to be done to set this meeting up for success?

### Alternatives to Meetings:

- Make a decision
- Communicate in writing
- One-on-one consultation rather than convening a group
- Telephone
- Meet only when 1 person cannot produce the desired results

## Meeting Types

Type	Purpose
Information-oriented	Give or gather information
Action-Oriented	Take action: Plan; Problem solve; decide
<b>Combination</b>	<b>Give or gather information &amp; take action</b>

Tilt Communications Ltd. 5

Some examples of meetings are:

- Problem solving a complaint
- Regular staff meetings
- Strategic planning sessions
- Performance evaluation
- Team building
- Process reviews

Meeting Types:

### **Information-oriented:**

Announce a new policy; Progress reports on projects. Sole purpose of meeting is to provide groups with the opportunity to hear and understand new information. Some information is better communicated in person. These meetings provide an opportunity for groups to ask questions and get clarification. They also allow the leader to see how the group responds to the new information. Allow for frequent opportunity for questions and answers. Explain how information relates to the group at the meeting.

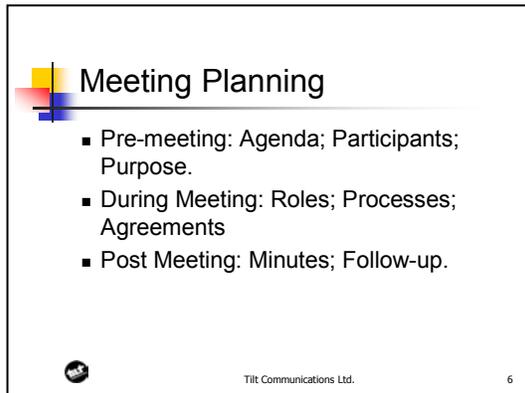
### **Action-Oriented:**

on new policy; Identify programs between two different departments; Develop recommendations for streamlining work flow.

### **Combination:**

Provide status report on a project and agree on plans for next month.

# Meeting Planning



**Meeting Planning**

- Pre-meeting: Agenda; Participants; Purpose.
- During Meeting: Roles; Processes; Agreements
- Post Meeting: Minutes; Follow-up.

Tilt Communications Ltd. 6

## Principles:

- If the desired end result of a session is not clear, it most likely will not be accomplished.
- The more effective the preparation, the more productive the team is.
- Preparation for team efforts and meetings shows respect for people's time.
- In general, there is a one-to-one relationship between preparation time and meeting time. That is, for a two hour session, two hours of preparation are necessary.

## Pre-meeting:

- Plan and issue agenda including: Meeting purpose; desired outcomes; Agenda; pre-reading (if any); processes and leads in the meeting; How decisions will be made.
- Roles: facilitator; leader; recorder; time keeper if needed; processes and leads in the meeting; alternatives for processes and tools.
- Arrangements: Room set-up; materials needed/equipment; refreshments.

## During Meeting:

### Start:

- Review purpose, desired outcomes, and agenda. Seek agreement on these
- Review ground rules and seek agreement.
- Review process and seek agreement on process. Warning do not get hung up on process ... if possible seek understanding of process.
- Agree on decision making method.

### During:

- Explain process & tools at start of each topic.
- Discuss content, **not** process.
- Establish commitment, agreement & decisions.

### End:

- Review Action plan
- Summarize the meeting; next steps and set date for next meeting. (review desired outcomes for next meeting if applicable)
- Evaluate the meeting.

## Post Meeting:

- Publish "minutes" including agreements, commitments; decisions; and action plan.

## Planning Components



### Components of Planning

- Desired Outcomes;
- Context Analysis;
- Stakeholder Analysis;
- Participants, Roles & Functions;
- Logistics & Room arrangements;
- Decision making options;
- Agenda;

Tilt Communications Ltd. 6

Time required to plan for the meeting is dependent on the importance of the meeting and the desired outcomes. Also is dependent on the context of the meeting. For example the “weekly meeting” would likely require less time to plan than a major change initiative. Context relates to the culture of the organization and the topic of the meeting.

Planning is also related to the amount of change, whether consensus is required, the diversity of the stakeholders, and engagement of the participants.

## Desired Outcomes



### Desired Outcomes

- Clear and concise statement of the desired end result or product of the meeting.
- Provide direction for developing the agenda.
- Measure success of the meeting.

Tilt Communications Ltd. 7

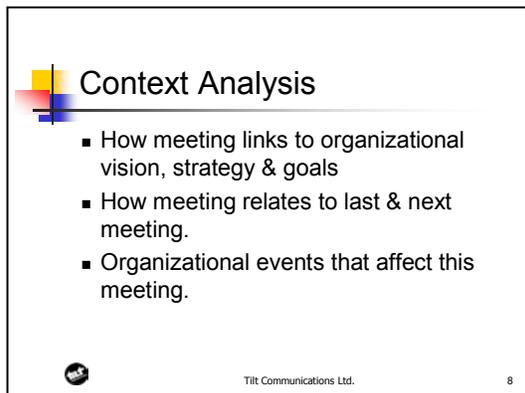
### Some principles for developing desired outcomes:

- Ask, “What do you want to have accomplished by the end of the meeting? What does success look like?”
- State the desired end result or product, e.g. a list, an agreement, a plan ...
- Be brief
- State the desired outcome from the point of view of the participant.
- If the desired outcome is information, state the purpose of the information.

### Examples:

Desired Outcomes:	Goals :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <u>list</u> of ideas for generating new sales.</li> <li>• An <u>understanding</u> of a new vacation policy.</li> <li>• A <u>plan</u> for introducing a new product into the market.</li> <li>• A <u>procedure</u> for handling customer complaints.</li> <li>• A <u>list</u> of causes of employee absenteeism.</li> <li>• A <u>plan</u> for measuring the effectiveness of new employee training.</li> <li>• A <u>plan</u> for cross training employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To generate new sales.</li> <li>• To ensure all employees correctly schedule vacations.</li> <li>• To successfully introduce a new product into the market.</li> <li>• To handle customer complaints effectively.</li> <li>• To reduce employee absenteeism.</li> <li>• To have effective employee training.</li> <li>• To increase productivity through cross training.</li> </ul>

## Context Analysis



**Context Analysis**

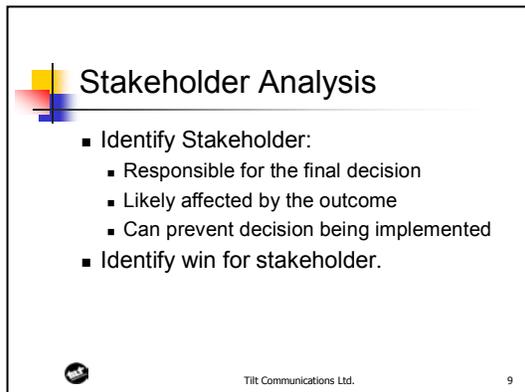
- How meeting links to organizational vision, strategy & goals
- How meeting relates to last & next meeting.
- Organizational events that affect this meeting.

Tilt Communications Ltd. 8

Every team process and one-on-one interaction exists in a context. Examining the context before a meeting is a way of scanning the environment to determine which events have an affect on the meeting, as well as, noticing how this meeting might affect other events.

Examining the context helps leaders and participants identify where a particular meeting fits in the overall scheme of things, which helps determine if and how they need to participate. Knowing the context helps a leader make conscious choices about roles, decision making desired outcomes and agenda.

## Stakeholder Analysis



**Stakeholder Analysis**

- Identify Stakeholder:
  - Responsible for the final decision
  - Likely affected by the outcome
  - Can prevent decision being implemented
- Identify win for stakeholder.

Tilt Communications Ltd. 9

A stakeholder analysis is done by: identifying the stakeholders; and developing an understanding of what success might be for each one.

All efforts to make change in organizations involve politics at some point. Stakeholders' analysis allows an understanding of key issues at the outset and sets the foundation for dealing with peoples' concerns in a proactive way that builds agreement.

To identify stakeholders:

- List final decision makers
- List people who will be affected by the outcome
- List people who have the power to assist or block the decision.
- For each person, identify what success might be, that is what the "win" might be.
- Select attendees for the meeting to include a representative for each point of view/key stakeholder group.

## Logistics & Room set-up



### Logistics & Room Set-up

- Who is setting up the meeting
- Location
- Pre-meeting materials. Creation and dissemination.
- Room set-up
  - Closed circle or rectangle
  - Semi-circle or "U" with tables
  - Semi-circle or "U" without tables

 Tilt Communications Ltd. 10

- Decide who is responsible for calling the meeting (is it you or should it be another stakeholder?).
- What is the best location for the meeting?
- What materials are needed to help achieve desired outcomes? What would participants need to read prior to the meeting that will help the success of the meeting? Who will create the agenda and or pre-meeting materials? Who will send out the materials?

### Room set-up:

Discomfort can be distracting. Rooms that work against focus can contribute to unfocused meetings.

Consider:

- Wall space (or flipchart easel for group memory)
- Placement of chairs so all group member can focus on task at hand.
- Enough space so member are not crowded.
- Select room arrangement that most accommodates: purpose/desired outcomes for meeting; need for group memory.

### Room Arrangement Options:

Option:	Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<b>Closed circle or rectangle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages eye contact, personal contact with others.</li> <li>• Especially appropriate when group is working on interpersonal issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can encourage interpersonal conflict and confrontation.</li> <li>• Focuses on people, not the task.</li> <li>• Not conducive to using group memory.</li> </ul>
<b>Semi-circle or "U" with tables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows group to focus on group memory.</li> <li>• Status differential minimized while roles are clear.</li> <li>• Reduces interpersonal conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tables can be a barrier.</li> <li>• Participants still unable to see each other.</li> </ul>
<b>Semi-circle or "U" without tables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No barriers between people.</li> <li>• Can accommodate larger groups.</li> <li>• Single focus on task.</li> <li>• Equal distance from task.</li> <li>• Equal status of participants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial discomfort for people who are used to having tables.</li> <li>• Coffee cups, writing materials have to be placed on floor.</li> </ul>

## Agenda



### Agenda

- Identify and sequence topics
- Select a process
- Identify lead person/time needed for each topic
- Earmark potential pitfalls
- Identify logistical support

Tilt Communications Ltd. 11

Agenda planning is the process of thinking and building a clear list of topics, process steps and time necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

The product of agenda planning is the written agenda that serves as a road map for the meeting. Planning an agenda also helps to identify a strategy to completing a successful and effective meeting.

### Some principles are:

- An agenda is a road that the group can consciously deviate from, as the meeting progresses.
- The agenda must be agreed on by the group (agenda is not useful until the group agrees on it).
- Successful agenda planning can result in a decision that a meeting is not necessary.
- Effective agendas contain the fewest topics possible so they can be addressed to the necessary depth.

### Example Agenda:

**<A COMPANY OR DEPARTMENT>  
<Team Name>  
Meeting, <Date> @ <time>, <Location>**

**PURPOSE:** Kick-off the start of an extraordinary increase in effectiveness and efficiency within the <Team>.

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

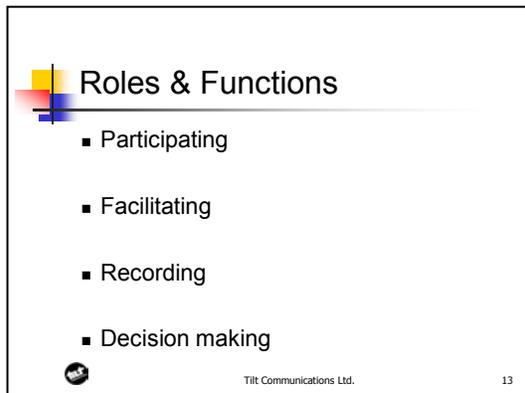
- Identify relative strengths and weakness within our working relationships
- Learn and apply tools for continuous improvement
- List of challenges/issues for the next year (with the top challenges identified)

**ATTENDEES:** Team Member Names; Guests; <Employee or external> (Facilitator)

**Bring:** Completed form on describing how each role fits together.

#	WHAT	HOW	WHO	TIME
1	Review Agenda, desired outcomes & expectations.	Present, discuss, Hopes & concerns, agree	Facilitator, All	~20 min
2	Review Team interaction Questionnaire	Present Discuss, review successes and failures	All	~20 min
3	Review how each role fits in the whole.	Present, discuss agree.	All	~20 min
4	Tools for Meeting planning	Present, apply, discuss	Facilitator, All	~60 min
5	Tools for Process reviews.	Present, apply, discuss	Facilitator, All	~60 min.
6	Challenges over next year.	Brainstorm, N/3 vote	All	~45 min
7	Next steps	Action Plan, List, brainstorm.	All	~20 min
8	Meeting Evaluation	Plus/Delta	All	~10 min

## Roles & Functions



**Roles & Functions**

- Participating
- Facilitating
- Recording
- Decision making

Tilt Communications Ltd. 13

### **Participating:**

- Take responsibility for making the meeting successful. How am I helping to achieve success? How can I contribute more to help achieve success?
- Actively Seek Clarification (ASK) ... Including active listening
- Provide input (contribute ideas), challenge ideas, accept action items.
- Help other members in their roles.
- Discuss the issues.

Review 3M meeting site on active listening:

([http://www.3m.com/meetingnetwork/readingroom/meetingguide\\_listening.html](http://www.3m.com/meetingnetwork/readingroom/meetingguide_listening.html) )

### **Facilitating:**

- Guiding the meeting through the agenda.
- Keeping the group focused on the task.
- Encouraging participation.
- Making sure everyone is working on the same thing, in the same way, at the same time (I.e. getting process agreements).
- Make suggestions to increase the meetings effectiveness and efficiency.
- Focus on process with a balance between people and goal.

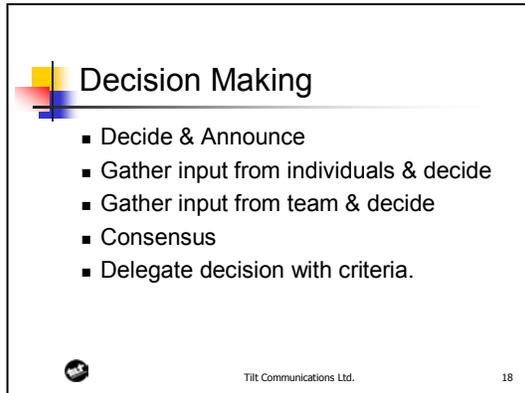
### **Recording:**

- Keeping a record of what is said. Record the basics:
  - Action Plan (Primary Responsible Person (Who); Task to be completed; Estimated completion date. (Sometimes may record how the task will be completed.
  - Agreements reached (decisions made and recommendations made)
- Issues (description of the issue; someone who is responsible for follow-up; and the “drop-dead” date for the issue (i.e. date when the issue, if the issue is unresolved, is no longer important to be resolved)
- Handling information. Distribute the minutes to appropriate people. Maintain a record of the minutes.
- Record team decisions; issues; and actions (Record acts like a “stake in the ground”)

### **Decision Making:**

- Making the final decision.
- Identifying constraints.
- Select a decision making option.

## Decision Making



**Decision Making**

- Decide & Announce
- Gather input from individuals & decide
- Gather input from team & decide
- Consensus
- Delegate decision with criteria.

Tilt Communications Ltd. 18

**Decide and Announce.** The leader makes a decision with little or no input, and then announces the decision to others who must carry it out.

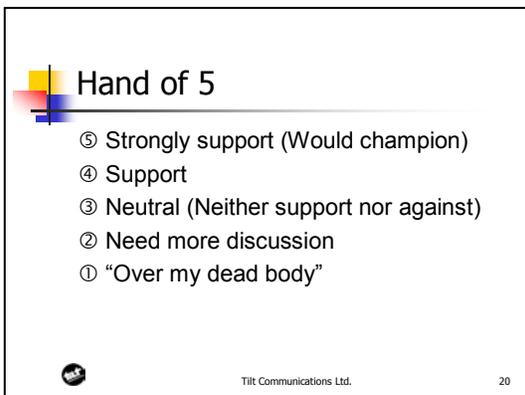
**Gather Input from Individuals and Decide.** The leader asks other for input ... ideas, information, suggestions, etc. The leader then makes the decision.

**Gather Input from Team and Decide.** The leader asks others to share their ideas, information, and suggestions in a session. Team member can analyze information and build upon one another's ideas.

**Consensus.** A consensus decision is one that each member can live with and actively support. The leader and all other sin a group provide input, then together they make a mutual decision that all agree to support.

**Delegate Decision with Criteria.** The leader points out a situation requiring a decision, states any constraints (deadlines, budget, resources, quality requirements, etc.) and delegates the decision to others. The leader does not alter the decision as long as it adheres to the constraints.

## Hand of 5 (Consensus Decision Making)

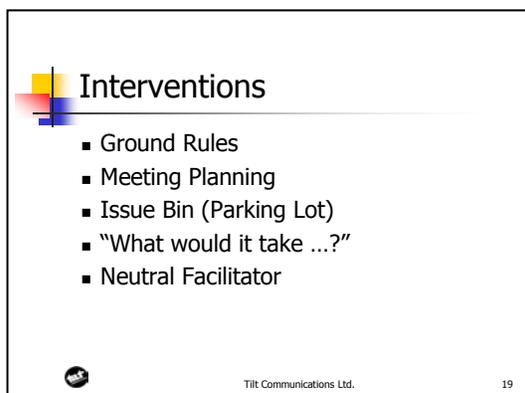


**Hand of 5**

- ⑤ Strongly support (Would champion)
- ④ Support
- ③ Neutral (Neither support nor against)
- ② Need more discussion
- ① "Over my dead body"

Tilt Communications Ltd. 20

## Interventions

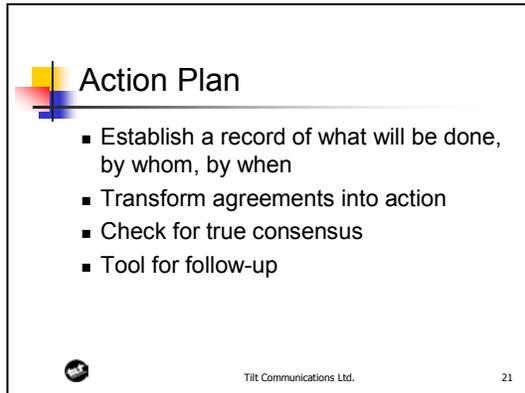


**Interventions**

- Ground Rules
- Meeting Planning
- Issue Bin (Parking Lot)
- "What would it take ...?"
- Neutral Facilitator

Tilt Communications Ltd. 19

## Action Plan



**Action Plan**

- Establish a record of what will be done, by whom, by when
- Transform agreements into action
- Check for true consensus
- Tool for follow-up

Tilt Communications Ltd. 21

The action plan concludes the session in a way that acknowledges what happened during the meeting and sets in motion actions to implement decisions made.

The action plan is developed by the group using group memory to show clear agreements about outcomes, expectations and who is going to do what by when. Make completion dates as realistic as possible. Ensure that responsibility is assigned to an individual, if a group is responsible then designate a “primary responsible person” (PRP). Communicate the action plan to all key stakeholders. Clarify procedures for tracking

results.

## Example Action Plan

Action	PRP <sup>1</sup>	Status	Est. End Date	How
Confirm with Fred that he is on the DRB (Decision Review Board)	John Doe	Completed	1/12	Take Fred out for coffee let him know how important he is to the success of the project.
E-mail to team issues/changes that we are considering that are related to issues identified at offsite meeting and will impact team’s work	Jane Doe		6/12	
Complete “straw model” of Project plan road map for next meeting	J. Q. Citizen		6/12	Work with F, Q, R, and Z ... to complete plan
Team met again on Dec 13 ... agree on road map project	J. Q. Citizen		13/12	
Recognizing that there is a transition period, discuss with DRB how we should handle the transition. There is likely to be some confusion on metrics and direction in Q1 and Q2 in 2001	J. Q. Citizen		??	Attend business-planning meeting on Monday Dec. xx. When we have a roadmap completed present question to DRB

1 - PRP stands for Primary Responsible Person (this not necessarily the person who will complete the task)

## Work Sheet for meeting planning

Meeting Purpose:		
Desired Outcomes:		
Context assessment:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How meeting links to the organizational, departmental vision, strategy, goals.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How meeting relates to last and next meeting.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational events that affect this meeting.</li> </ul>		
Stakeholder Analysis: Who are the key stakeholders? What is a win for each stakeholder?	Stakeholder	Win
Attendees & roles:	Attendee	Role
Room arrangements:		
Decision Making method Consider: time; buy-in required; information, expertise in group.		
Fallback, for consensus decision making		
Potential pitfalls: What could go wrong? What could prevent success?	List of potential pitfalls	Preventions/Interventions
Logistics	How to notify people:	Supplies needed:
Other preparation needed:		

## Evaluation

 **Evaluation**

- Puts closure on the meeting. Provides direct feedback and checks contribution to meeting success.
- Used to improve quality of meetings (must be prepared to use to improve meetings)

 Tilt Communications Ltd. 24

An evaluation creates a list of what worked to make the meeting successful and what needs to be changed to make future meetings even more successful.

The evaluation can be done in a variety of ways. The evaluation can range from: a few short comments at the end of a session can be used; to a “plus/delta” (what worked/what needs to be changed); to an in-depth evaluation (follow-up interviews).

## Example Evaluation

 **Evaluation**

<b>What worked (Plus)</b>	<b>What to do differently (Delta)</b>
Used consensus	Send out reading material ahead of the meeting.

 Tilt Communications Ltd. 25

The type of question is important. That is: what worked to make this meeting successful; what needs to change to make the meeting even more successful next time?

NOTE: if the evaluation becomes a formality then the comments become meaningless (e.g. we like the doughnuts, no coffee, want fruit ...)

## Follow – Up

### Team Leader (Chair):

- Checks to see that action taken was successful and that results fit with overall vision/direction
- Communicates results
- Recognizes individual and team contribution to success

### Team Member:

- Conducts evaluation and actions
- Reports results
- Recognizes individual and team contribution to success

## Selected Resources

### Website:

- 3M Meeting Network (<http://www.3m.com/meetingnetwork/index.html>)

### Books:

- Sam Kaner (1996). "Facilitators Guide to Participatory Decision-Making", New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, B.C. ISBN 1-55092-255-6
- Deborah Harrington-Mackin (1996). "Keeping the Team Going". American Management Association, New York, New York. ISBN 0-8144-7008-4