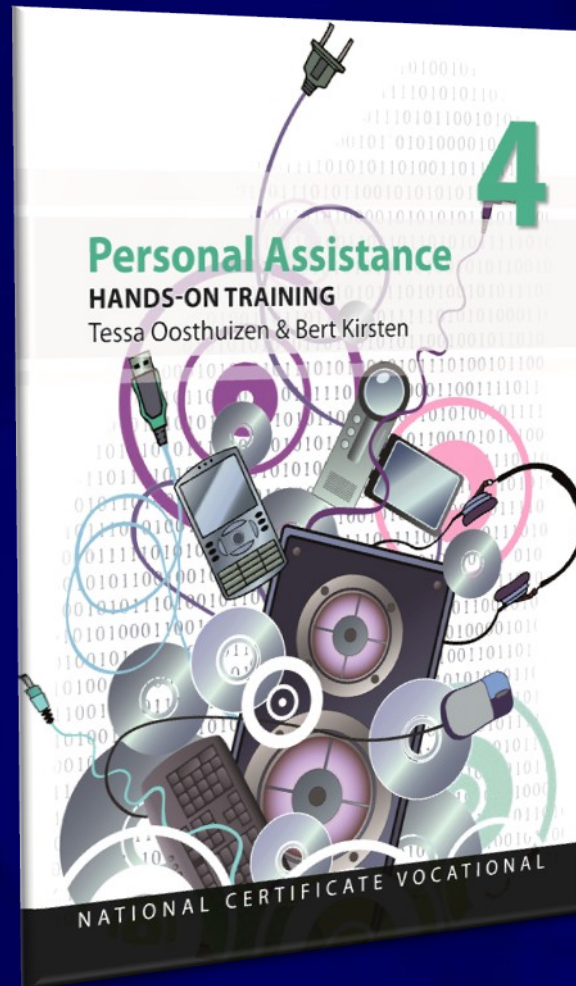


Personal Assistance 4



Module 1: Plan and Conduct Meetings



Module 1: Plan and Conduct Meetings

- **After completing this module, you will be able to:**
 - **Describe standard meeting protocols and the importance of using them.**
 - **Describe ways to determine the needs and objectives of a meeting**
 - **Understand the importance of reaching decisions in a meetings**
 - **Explain ways of managing discussions and problem solving**
 - **Describe ways to determine the appropriate delegates for a meeting**

1. Plan and organise meetings of different types

- **After completing this outcome, you will be able to:**
 - **Describe standard meeting protocols and the importance of using them**
 - **Describe ways to determine the need and objectives of a meeting**
 - **Understand the importance of reaching decisions in a meeting**
 - **Explain ways of managing discussions and problem solving**
 - **Describe ways to determine the appropriate delegates for a meeting**

1.1 Why are meetings held?

- **To solve a particular problem**
- **To make a decision regarding an important issue**
- **To analyse the successes and failures of an event or project**
- **To generate ideas that could be used**
- **To brief people on a particular event or subject**
- **To report progress on a situation**

Meetings used in businesses

- **Departmental meetings**
- **Staff meetings**
- **Team meeting**
- **Management meeting**
- **Board meeting**
- **One-on-one meeting**

1.2 Types of meetings

- **Formal or informal**
- **Public or private**
- **Annual General Meetings**

Activity 1

- Think of specific examples of the following meetings that you have attended as part of your SIM experiences, part-time work you have had or even sports or school committees.

Type of meeting	Who attended it?	Why was it held?	Explain if it was formal or informal
Team meeting			
Management meeting			
One-to-one meeting			



1.3 Is a meeting necessary?

- **Must this information be shared in a face to face situation?**
- **Do I need the expertise and opinions of all the people I want to attend in order to make a decision?**
- **Will a meeting save time in making a decision?**

1.4 Deciding on objectives for a meeting

- Is it to inform the attendees?
- Is it to solve a problem or resolve any conflict
- Is it to generate new ideas?
- Is it to get feedback?
- Is it to monitor a project?
- Is it to complete a particular task of project?
- Is it a routine meeting?

1.5 Deciding on who needs to attend a meeting

- **Does the person have relevant skill or knowledge so that he/she can provide relevant input required by the agenda items?**
- **Does the person have an interest in the outcome of the discussion? Is it relevant to their work?**

1.6 Meeting documentation

- **Notice**
 - **Names of the people who need to attend**
 - **The date and time as well as the length of the meeting**
 - **The venue for the meeting**

Activity 2

- **You have been asked to draft a notice for a staff meeting at your organisation.**
 - **What method would you use to ensure that people knew about the meeting? Explain your choice.**
 - **What details would you include in the notice?**



1.6 Meeting documentation

- **Agenda**
 - the details of the meeting – which group, where they are meeting and the time frame
 - welcome/opening
 - attendance to be recorded
 - approve minutes of the previous meeting
 - matters arising from the previous meeting
 - a list of new points to be discussed – this section is where most of the
 - discussion in the meeting usually takes place
 - general – allowing an attendee to raise another point for discussion
 - arrangements/announcements of details for the next meeting
 - close of meeting.

Activity 3

- **Arrange the following agenda items in a more suitable flow for a management meeting.**
 - **Matters arising**
 - **Attendance**
 - **Opening and welcoming**
 - **Potential disciplinary hearing for Michael Grade**
 - **Setting monthly sales targets**
 - **Monthly reports from the following departments:**
 - **Finance**
 - **Production**
 - **Human Resources**
 - **Arrangements for the next meeting**
 - **General**
 - **Closing**
 - **Approval of previous minutes**



Example of a standard agenda



Agenda for the monthly management meeting of ABC Stationers, to be from 9am to 11 am on Friday 3 April 2009 in the company boardroom.

Agenda item / objective	Presenter	Time
Welcome	Des Mashilo	09h00 – 09h05
Attendance – register to be circulated Apologies	Secretary – Andrea Swart	09h05 – 09h10
Adoption of previous minutes	CEO – Des Mashilo	09h10 – 09h15
Matters arising	CEO – Des Mashilo	09h15 – 09h20
New matters		
1. Productivity goals – identify possible standards for the various departments	Sydney van Schalkwyk	09h20 – 10h00
2. Supplier problems – find solutions or alternative suppliers	Thabo Mbiko	10h00 – 10h20
3. Staff outing – determine the budget and suitable date	Sally Smith	10h20 – 10h40
General – matters to be suggested	Des Mashilo	10h40 – 10h55
Closing	Des Mashilo	10h55 – 11h00

Activity 4

- **Working in small groups of 3 or 4, look carefully at the agenda below. Identify why it is not a good example. What should be added to make it more suitable? Write your answers in point form.**

AGENDA

The agenda of the board meeting of Sampsons Super Store to be held in the conference room at 9h30 am on Friday

1. Attendance
2. Feedback from the management meeting
3. Feedback on sales targets
4. Updated business plan
5. Plan marketing campaign



Attendance register

Attendance register for the Staff Meeting of XYZ Printers on Monday 3 April 2008, held at 3PM in the company boardroom.

Surname	Name	Job Title	Signature

Minutes

**MINUTES of the MANAGEMENT MEETING held on Monday 10 February 2009 at 3pm
in the conference room of XYZ printers at 235 Main Rd, Retreat.**

Attendees: Eddie Hanson (EH), Suraya Slamet (SS), Agnes van Sittert (AS), Sandisa Matafeni (SM)

The meeting opened at 15.05.

- 1. Open and welcome:** Eddie Hanson
Apologies: Jan Koekemoer on leave
- 2. Previous minutes:** proposed by SS and seconded by SM

3.	HUMAN RESOURCES	By	Target date	Actual date
3.1	EH congratulated SS on completing all the staff reviews.			
3.2	Appointment of additional sales person has been approved. Position to be advertised in newspaper.	SS	15.2.09	
4.	SALES	By	Target date	Actual date
4.1	Report tabled regarding sales for the last month – see attached. AS reported that sales were up on last year and that sales targets had been achieved.			
4.2	Proposal drafted to Cadmint Enterprises to be followed up.	AS	14.2.09	

Activity 5

Rewrite the minutes below using a tabular format as in the example of XYZ printers.

MINUTES of MANAGEMENT MEETING

02 March 2009 – 2.30 – 3.30 pm – Deborah's office – All present.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING – MD: Deborah Visagie:

To discuss sales, financial and operational performance.

Minutes of January accepted – proposed by Martin and seconded by Vusi.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

Update on sales – Sally Eedes

- Sales total for February 2009: R190 675
- Sales target was set at R250 000
- Top sales: Andries R54 500
- Proposed a prize to incentivise sales. Was agreed that top sales in March would get a R300 bonus. Sally to organise voucher for next staff meeting on 8 April 2009.

Update on expenses – Mandla Khumalo

- Expenses for February 2009: R61 325
- Petty cash: new procedures. Staff to be informed at a meeting. Mandla to prepare memo and set date for briefing by end of next week.

Update on production – Martin Roaden

- Total units for February 2009: 8 505
- Target was: 9000
- Supplier problems. Late delivery on ink.
- Proposed that we try new supplier. Slightly more expensive but guarantee delivery times. Decision was to rather investigate other cheaper suppliers.
- Martin to report back at next meeting.

Update on Human Resources – Vusi Banda

- No resignations but Synoria Venter on maternity leave until 1 June 2009.
- Proposed that temporary staff member be appointed to cover her work. All agreed. Vusi to advertise position in newspaper by this Friday.

General

- All leave applications for Easter period due by 20 March 2009.
- Next meeting on the 6 April 2009



1.7 Suitable arrangements

- **Arrangements may include:**
 - **The venue**
 - **Equipment**
 - **Catering**
 - **Flights and accommodation**



The Venue

- **The person chairing the meeting must be able to see all the participants.**
- **Chairs should be fairly comfortable**
- **If you know the participants well and need to separate people who dislike each other or have side conversations, you can set up place names to make sure they do not sit next to one another.**
- **Large groups are best accommodated in a theatre, lecture- or classroom-style arrangement. Ideally, each participant should have access to table space.**
- **A U-shape or semicircle format is best when there are presentations or if equipment is to be used. This prevents participants from having to strain to see them.**
- **Smaller groups can be accommodated around a boardroom table in a rectangular shape.**

Checklists

- **List of all potential participants – with telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and postal addresses where appropriate**
- **Agenda drawn up**
- **Who was contacted, when, who has responded?**
- **Documents sent out – notice, agenda, previous minutes, directions to venue?**
- **Venue booked – when, with whom, where?**
- **Catering arranged**
- **Equipment arranged**
- **Extra copies made of relevant documents**
- **Attendance register printed**



Assignment 1

- **You need to prepare to chair a meeting as part of your SIM experience. Think of a suitable meeting that you can hold that relates to your SIM company. (Alternatively, this activity can be done in class in small groups, using topics that relate to class/college experiences).**
- **For this task, please:**
 1. **a) Draft a notice including all relevant details.**
 - b) **Include a list of the people asked to attend.**
 - c) **Explain what method you would use to distribute the notice and why it is the most suitable for your meeting. (Evidence of e-mail, fax, memo, etc. should be printed and attached).**
 2. **Prepare an agenda with at least three topics for discussion.**
 3. **Prepare an attendance register.**

You can use the examples and templates in the notes and adapt them to suit your purposes, or you may draw up your own documentation, but please bear in mind the recommendations in your notes.



2. Meeting Protocols

- **After completing this outcome, you should be able to:**
 - **Arrange and compile and agenda**
 - **Inform delegates about the meeting**
 - **Structure a meeting in accordance with the protocols**
 - **Run a meeting to achieve the objectives within the time frame.**

Guidelines to be followed:

- All attendees should arrive on time.
- If a person is unable to attend a meeting, they must send their apologies in advance to the chairperson or secretary.
- Everyone should participate but all points must be raised and discussed through the chair.
- When attending a meeting, focus on the meeting itself.
- Side conversations are rude.

Useful terminology

Adjourn

Closure

Casting
vote

Consensus

Convened

Decision

Deadlock

Proposal

Quorum

Secunder

Unanimous

Activity 6

Think about the meetings you have attended in the past.

- **Read the statement.**
- **Does / did they happen: Always? Often? Seldom? Never?**



The meetings I attend:	A	O	S	N
1. Result in good decision being made				
2. Take up too much time for the value gained				
3. Result in participants feeling good about the group's decisions				
4. Result in creative solutions or ideas				
5. Run on time from start to end				
6. Run according to the agenda				
7. Stop me from doing more productive work				
8. Promote the participation of all attendees				
9. Allow participants to speak freely and openly				
10. Are called only when necessary				
11. Deal with agenda items that are not relevant to me				
12. Are often dominated by a few members				

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

- **The secretary or minute taker**
 - **Preparation**
 - **During the meeting**
 - **Follow-up**

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

- **The chairperson**
 - To draft the agenda of the meeting in accordance with the previous minutes and ensure all relevant items are listed.
 - To decide who the attendees need to be.
 - To check the agenda, notice and any previous minutes are sent out on time.
 - To welcome and introduce all attendees.
 - To ensure that the agenda is followed and all the business listed is dealt with in the correct order and is relevant to the matters being discussed.
 - To keep to the times planned – starting on time and with each agenda point.
 - To encourage participation and debates through assigning people tasks or asking questions to elicit information.
 - To manage any conflicts that arise.
 - To keep the meeting flowing and to the point. They should not allow one point to overshadow all others, so that the objectives of the meeting are met.
 - To summarise debates and main points of the meeting and ensure that all actions required are listed and assigned to suitable people.
 - To close the meeting. To make sure that all paperwork relating to the meeting is completed, i.e. minutes, attendance register.

2.3 Following the agenda

- **Opening and greeting**
- **Attendance**
- **Acceptance of previous minutes**
- **New matters or matters at hand**
- **Close the meeting and establish a new date**

2.4 Decision makers in meetings

- **Consensus**
- **Show of hands**
- **Secret ballots**



2.5 Encouraging and managing discussions

- **Remind people of the time allocated and how much time is left.**
- **When needed, be flexible as regards time.**
- **Focus on both the content and the process.**
- **Do not assume that people feel comfortable and confident enough to speak.**
- **Be careful of misinterpreting silences – these are not always a sign that people agree.**
- **Give options rather than advice when pushing for a decision to be made.**
- **Give people a suitable chance to think before making decisions**
- **Learn to read basic body language so that you can see what people are thinking, and direct the discussions appropriately.**
- **Ask if the group has any questions, concerns or suggestions.**
- **Ask the group to suggest the best action plan**
- **Try to get negotiations to a win-win situation.**
- **Ask members of the team to prepare in advance for specific items on the agenda.**
- **Show respect and courtesy to all participants.**

2.6 Managing conflict

- **Conflict is caused by:**
 - **Misinformation or a lack of correct information, which causes a lack of understanding of an issue.**
 - **Relationships that break down because of strong emotions, stereotypical views, miscommunication, or negative behaviour such as shouting.**
 - **Differences in value systems – what is important to one person, is not as important to another.**
 - **A perceived imbalance of power or resources, e.g. one department has a larger budget allocated than another.**
 - **Competition for attention, resources or power.**

Managing conflict

- **Ignore trivial outbursts where possible. If they continue, you will have to address them.**
- **Try to use humour to defuse the tension.**
- **Do not make a disagreements a personal issue**
- **Ask opponents to summarise their main points**
- **Try to show the opponents what areas they agree on and downplay the areas that they disagree on.**
- **If arguments are carried from the past, try to focus on the present and future**
- **Rephrase the statements that are made so they are less aggressive.**
- **Try to get the opponents to see each other's point of view and agree on at least one point.**
- **As chairperson, you have the right to take the deciding vote.**
- **Try to get opponents to compromise in order to find a solution that suits both**
- **Parties.**
- **Collaboration on decisions is the best solution but this may take time and not be suitable in that meeting. In this instance, a separate meeting could be suggested.**
- **Remind participants that remarks may go on record**

Activity 7

- 1. Break into groups of four people.**
- 2. Choose one of the topics below as an objective for a meeting:**
 - **Planning for a staff outing to Rantanga Junction.**
 - **Identifying and implementing a suitable dress code for all office staff.**
 - **Should work times be changed from 8am – 5pm to 7.30am – 4.30 pm?**
 - **Latecoming of staff has increased. Make a proposal to address how to stop this.**
- 3. Each person in the group must choose a different topic (it may be best to draw names) and must prepare a few points on this topic.**
- 4. Take turns to do the following:**
 - 1. Each person will take a turn to act as chairperson and facilitate a discussion with the rest of the group on their topic. (The maximum time allowed is 5 minutes).**
 - 2. Each person must act as the minute-taker for a discussion while another person is chairing the meeting.**



Assignment 2

You are now required to chair the meeting, using the agenda you drew up.

- **Remember to:**
 - **appoint a minute-taker (you will need the minutes for Assignment 3)**
 - **stick to time frames**
 - **manage the discussions and deal with any conflict.**
- **After the meeting, please complete the self-assessment sheet and ask a participant at the meeting to complete a peer assessment sheet.**



3. Follow up after meetings

- **After completing this outcome, you will be able to:**
 - **Ensure that all documentation is complete and circulated after the meeting**
 - **Suggest ways to making meetings more effective.**

3.1 Minutes

- **Minutes should be distributed within forty-eight hours.**
- **Each person who has been assigned a task needs to take responsibility for it.**

Assignment 3

- 1. Attach the draft copy of the minutes from the meeting you chaired in assignment 2. Label them clearly as a draft.**
- 2. Make any changes needed, check the spelling and grammar. Attach a copy of these amended minutes.**
- 3. Draw up an action plan using the template that follows. List all the actions that are needed, who is responsible and dates set. How will you follow up to ensure that each of these actions is completed?**



3.2 Evaluation of the meeting

- **What went wrong:**
 - **The meeting lost focus**
 - **Participants deviated from the topic**
 - **The meeting ran for longer than planned for**
 - **Participants were badly mannered**
 - **One person dominated all the discussions**

Summative assessment

1. Andrea and Thabo happen to meet in the passage at the office and start talking about what bad days they are both having because the photocopier keep jamming. They work out what might be causing all the breakdowns. Can this be called a meeting? Explain your answer. (2)
2. List four reasons for meetings to be held and give an example for each. (8)
3. What is the difference between a public and private meeting? (1)
4. Give two reasons when you would find it necessary to hold a meeting rather than communicate in writing. (2)
5. What purpose does a meeting notice serve? (1)
6. What is the aim of an agenda? (2)
7. List the standard items that should be included on the agenda. (9)



Summative assessment

1. You are asked to brief a new Personal Assistant on minute-taking for the management meeting. Briefly outline the guidelines you would give him/her on taking good minutes. (10)
2. What would his/her responsibilities be as the secretary – before, during and after the meeting? (8)
3. Explain the three ways that voting may take place in a workplace meeting. (6)
4. How would you encourage effective participation in a meeting if you were the chairperson? (8)
5. Anton is representing the finance department at the meeting that you are chairing. He feels very strongly that the managers are overspending and he is dominating the meeting and becoming aggressive when the other managers try to make a point. What will you do to manage him?

