

Saving a Meeting When You're Not in Charge

Before the Meeting

- Ask:
 - What is the agenda?
 - What is the purpose of the meeting?
 - Who should attend?
 - What preparation should I (or my staff) do before the meeting?
 - How can I help during the meeting?
- Comment on whether agendas are realistic in terms of scope, time, and expectations.
- Suggest the need for meeting norms.

During the Meeting

- Ask:
 - What are purposes of and expectations for the meeting?
 - Ask probing questions.
 - Ask how ____ relates to ____.
 - “Could you explain...?”
- Make connections:
 - Between topics and/or implications for those at the meeting.
 - Clarify and real’ for someone: “What this might mean for ____ is _____.”
 - Between topics and/or implications for those at meeting.
- Redefine/redirect the conversation.
- Summarize/reiterate key points, particularly decisions made, next steps, and assignments (‘clean up hitter’).
- Offer:
 - “This doesn’t feel as constructive as it could be” vs. “This is not a constructive meeting” or “You’re not being constructive.”
 - “Let’s get back to the agenda.”
 - Offer concrete examples of issues.
- Call attention to sidebar conversations.
- Take responsibility; volunteer to get additional information.
- Suggest documenting concerns raised and items that need to be discussed at a future meeting.