

SAVING TIME AT MEETINGS

TOP TEN TIPS
FROM RON MILAM
CONSULTING

- 1. Ask if the meeting is necessary:** Make sure the meeting has clear goals, outcomes and an agenda so it is worth your time and energy.
- 2. Estimate the amount of time for each agenda item:** Estimate how long each agenda item will take and do your best to stay on track during the meetings. When an agenda item goes over time, either allocate some more time to it or put it on the agenda for the next meeting.
- 3. Use your limited time wisely:** Limit the amount of time for updates and announcements and instead use the majority of your meeting to discuss and decide important items.
- 4. Use a “Parking Lot” or “Bike Rack”:** If someone comes up with a great idea for something to discuss but it’s not on the current agenda, add it to a sheet of paper labeled “Bike Rack,” which contains items to be discussed at future meetings.
- 5. Start and end on time:** Starting late wastes valuable meeting time, and so does dragging on after the meeting should come to a close.
- 6. Designate a timekeeper:** Have a meeting participant watch the time and occasionally remind people how much time is left for each agenda item.
- 7. Manage the “long-winded talkers”:** If your group has one or more members who tend to talk for long periods of time, find a time while they are speaking to interject and summarize what they have said and ask if others have something to add.
- 8. Capture people’s thoughts on poster paper:** If an idea gets recorded on a large sheet of paper in front of everyone, it’s less likely to be repeated by another meeting participant.
- 9. Evaluate:** At the end of the meeting, take a few minutes for everyone to go around and reflect on what went well and what could be improved and you’ll get some more ideas for how to save time at future meetings.
- 10. Hire an outside facilitator:** A skilled facilitator will work with your leadership to develop a good agenda and help your group adhere to agreed upon time limits during the meeting, often enabling your group to accomplish more in less time.

TO-DO LIST

- Bring along a watch or clock and put it in a place where people can see it.
- Make sure to have markers/poster paper on hand to record people’s thoughts.
- Provide copies of the agenda beforehand.
- Know how decisions will be made before you make them, so that you don’t have to spend time on this during the meeting.
- Compile all of the ideas on the “Bike Rack” and use them to create the next meeting’s agenda.
- Compile a list of all of the suggestions to improve the meetings and make sure the person planning the next meeting receives these.

Ron Milam has over 14 years of experience facilitating meetings and developing leadership for over 50 organizations.

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