



UNIVERSITY  
OF LAGOS



# UNLEASHING HUMAN POTENTIALS

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## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS INTRODUCTION

In our previous edition, we explored the **Essentials of Minutes and Report Writing**. The application of these essentials ensures that outcomes and key decisions of meetings are accurately documented and effectively communicated. This edition on **Planning and Management of Meetings** complements the last discussion by focusing on the processes that ensure meetings are well organised, purposeful, and result-oriented.

### PLANNING

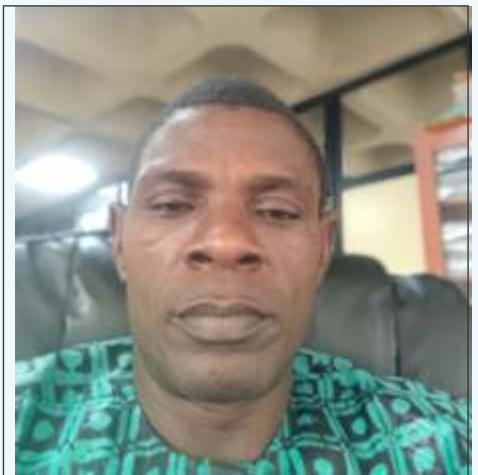
Planning is the process of determining in detail how to achieve a task before it is executed. It involves deciding beforehand **what** is to be done, **when** it is to be done, **how** it is to be done, and **who** will do it. Management, on the other hand, is the systematic procedure of strategising, structuring, guiding, and overseeing the endeavours of individuals striving to meet the goals of the entity.

### MEETING

A meeting is a defined real-time gathering of two or more people for the purpose of achieving a common goal through conversation and interaction. Meetings can be classified as either formal or informal. Formal meetings have a clear agenda, defined start and end times, and minutes are taken. Informal meetings, on the other hand, often lack a formal agenda, and no minutes are typically taken.

### Formal and Informal Meetings

Meetings may broadly be classified as either **Formal**



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or **Informal**. A formal meeting takes place for the purpose of achieving a common, stated objective. It takes place at a designated date, time, and location and follows a clear meeting agenda. The documentation of the meeting is called minutes. This records discussions, votes, and actions taken. An informal meeting on the other hand is any meeting between two or more people which **does not satisfy all** of the above criteria.

### Formal Meetings:

#### *Management Meeting*

A management meeting is presided over by the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation. It holds at intervals which could be weekly, monthly or quarterly. The agenda could include an update on performance, evaluation of goals/targets and decisions taken.

#### *Committee Meeting*

Committees are formed around specific issues that require collaborative efforts that cannot be adequately addressed in a Management/Board of Directors meeting. These committees meet regularly and report on their progress to the Management.

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### **Informal Meetings:**

By contrast to formal meetings, they do not always have a robust agenda, and no minutes are taken. Types of informal meetings include:

#### *Brainstorming Meeting*

A brainstorming meeting often includes a range of stakeholders to put fresh ideas on the table and discuss them as a group. The different points of view help the drivers of an initiative to refine their approach and understanding, as well as inject creativity into the process.

#### *Training Meeting*

Training in many cases is incorrectly classified as a formal meeting. While training might satisfy some of the criteria that fall under formal meetings, it does not usually involve writing minutes, instead, it is a collaboration between the trainer and trainee(s) to ensure that knowledge is imparted.

### **EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS**

To ensure successful meetings, the following steps are essential:

1. **Clear Agenda:** Invitees should know what to expect at the meeting.
2. **Define Meeting Objectives:** Clearly determine what you want to achieve from the meeting.
3. **Choose the Right Mode of Meeting:** Decide whether an online meeting is sufficient or if an in-person meeting is necessary.
4. **Preparation of Relevant Documents:** Gather and prepare relevant documents, reports, and materials needed for the meeting.
5. **Distribution of Materials:** Send meeting materials to committee members before the meeting.
6. **Arrangement of Logistics:** Make arrangements for refreshments, seating, and other necessary arrangements.
7. **Prepare Talking Points:** Bring key talking points to the table if you're leading a meeting that requires ideas or brainstorming.

8. **Track Motions and Decisions:** Ensure motions, decisions, and resolutions are properly documented.

9. **Prepare Action Letters:** Communicate assigned tasks or actions to individuals, specifying their responsibilities and deadlines.

10. **Finalise Minutes of Meeting:** Finalise minutes of meeting and distribute to members of the committee.

### **KEY INDICATORS OF A SUCCESSFUL MEETING**

1. **Clear Objectives:** Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound).

2. **Active Participation:** Everyone should have a chance to speak, listen, and ask questions.

3. **Actionable Outcomes:** Decisions, tasks, or deliverables should be assigned to specific persons with clear deadlines and expectations.

4. **Feedback Loop:** Ask for feedback to evaluate the meeting process and outcomes.

5. **Time Management:** Ensure the meeting starts and ends on time, and the agenda is realistic and prioritised.

6. **Follow-up Communication:** Facilitate clear and consistent communication that reinforces meeting outcomes and actions.

### **CONCLUSION**

The success of any meeting hinges significantly on meticulous planning, the establishment of clear objectives, and efficient execution. By focusing on key indicators of a successful meeting, administrators can consistently ensure that the meeting achieves its intended purpose. Effectiveness in the above will foster coordination, drive accountability, and enhance overall organisational productivity.