# Communication Guru™

**Smart Tips for Communicating Effectively and Profitably in Business**

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# Making Online Meetings More Effective

Hosting an online meeting is quickly becoming one of the most effective ways to get together with a group of colleagues or project team members, but how can supervisors, project managers, and meeting leaders make online meetings more effective? How would you describe the last online meeting you attended? Was it effective and engaging? Was it a timewaster? Did you accomplish your goals?

Barriers to effective online meetings often include lack of clear objectives, poorly managed meetings, and unprepared members. Here are eight tips for making online meetings more effective.

**1. Prepare as thoroughly as you would for an in-person meeting.** At least one week before the meeting, send out a detailed agenda with a clear meeting objective. In addition, send out background documents that need to be reviewed in advance. These include surveys, questions, results, project updates, and other information relevant to the meeting objective that will help bring participants up to speed. Before the meeting, check in with meeting attendees to ensure they are prepared.

**2. Using your meeting objectives as a guide, determine who should participate at the meeting.** The typical online meeting size is six to 25 people. A smaller group is easier to manage and keep engaged. Webinars, on the other hand, do well with any number of people.

**3. At the start of an online meeting, ask participants to announce themselves by name when they enter the meeting.** You may also want participants to announce themselves each time before speaking during the meeting. Ask participants to enunciate clearly and speak slowly.

**4. Set ground rules.** Remind participants of proper meeting etiquette—no working on other projects, checking email, or surfing the web. Keep the meeting moving along quickly, and keep participants focused. Announce start and end times, keep the discussion on topic, and minimize distractions.

**5. Manage communication and monitor participant involvement.** Be aware of silence and ask questions to get participants talking. When necessary, restate meeting objectives and outcomes to keep people on task and adjust if topics and discussion go off track.

**6. Use appropriate web-conferencing and collaboration tools** such as chat rooms and whiteboards to chart, discuss, and facilitate discussion, as well as to share and update documents and survey team members to gather project related data.

**7. Seek feedback at the end of the meeting.** Ask attendees what went well, what could have been done better, and what did each attendee take away from the meeting.

**8. Document follow-up and action items** from the meeting. Ensure that all participants are committed to action steps.

### Resources:

www.gotomeeting.com

www.webex.com

www.mycommittee.com

www.faciltate.com