Making the most of virtual meetings

Virtual meetings via conference call or Skype can be cheaper, more efficient, and more expedient than meetings in person. They can also be a complete bust if they’re not handled correctly. The next time you pull together a virtual conference, keep these pointers in mind:

- **Take charge.** You can’t quell sidebar conversations with an icy stare during a conference call, but you still should try to remain in control. Set a tight agenda and stick to it. Allot a set amount of time for each item and don’t go over. Keep things moving to keep all participants on their toes.
- **Be a good role model.** Without a room full of eyes on you, you may be tempted to check your email while someone else speaks or maybe hit the mute button while you take a call from someone else. Don’t do it. If others sense you aren’t giving your full attention to your own meeting, neither will they.
- **Ask pointed questions.** As you complete a point, don’t ask, “Does anyone have any questions?” Be more specific. Questions such as “Does anyone have any questions about the way the flux capacitor interacts with the reactor?” are more likely to generate useful conversation.

Source: [http://www.managebetter.biz/](http://www.managebetter.biz/)

Responsibility and accountability

Every single day, supervisors and managers complain about employees’ behavior and lack of accountability, but ultimately the problem is the leader’s lack of responsibility, the evidence of which is the evasion of difficult conversations. If leaders are unwilling to take ownership, how can those same leaders blame the employee? Signs that indicate a lack of leadership include:

- Blaming employees instead of coaching them.
- Avoiding performance feedback.
- Gossiping about the employee’s ineffectiveness.

- Transferring the troublemaker to another department.
- Firing a long-term employee who has had no warning.
- Making excuses for the lack of clear direction.
- Failing to communicate expectations

There are many reasons individual leaders struggle with responsibility and accountability. Here are four of the main ones:

- They do not understand the distinction between responsibility and accountability.
- They do not have appropriate support or resources.
- They have a skills gap.
- They lack discipline.

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

---John Quincy Adams

Crafting a great career elevator pitch

It’s called an “elevator” pitch based on the idea that you might bump into someone important in an elevator—the CEO of your company, the CEO of the company you’d love to work for, etc.—and you have only the duration of the elevator ride to explain who you are, what you do and why you’re amazing at it. For that reason, it must: Be short. Aim for 30 seconds or less (about 65 words). Highlight your unique skills and qualifications. Answer these questions: Who are you? What do you do? What are you looking for? When writing your own elevator pitch, consider the following:

- Introduce yourself with your professional identity, rather than your job title. For example, are you a trainer, or a learning and skills development professional?
- Don’t talk about what you do; lead with whom or how you help. “I’m an engineer,” is much less compelling than, “I help make sure rockets don’t explode on launch.” Verbs such as teach, develop, help and create paint you as an expert.
- Avoid jargon. Explain what you do so that your 10-year-old nephew could understand it.
- Consider including your soft skills. These are skills that could translate to almost any profession and might include, good communications skills, strong writing skills, customer service, etc. This is especially important if you don’t have much professional experience yet, or if you are looking to switch careers or industries.
- Make the pitch more about them than you. Sound backward? It’s not. You want to convey how you can help the other person, rather than simply describing who you are.

Source: [http://www.ragan.com/](http://www.ragan.com/)
Boosting your productivity by protecting your time

If you want to get more done, take ownership of your time. Our most satisfying work comes about when we’re playing offense, working on projects that we ourselves initiate. Look for ways to automate or delegate activities that are not a good use of your time. Say no to projects that aren’t a priority and maintain a relentless focus on self-directed goals that only you can achieve. Program your phone to only ring for select people, and resist emails first thing in the morning until you’ve achieved at least one important task. Recognize and honor your physical limitations by getting plenty of exercise and sleep, cycling between 90-minute bursts of focused work and short restorative breaks. And use your vacation time. Top performers view time off not as stalled productivity but as an investment in their future performance.


Getting maximum motivation from your bonus box

A bonus for good performance can motivate employees, but don’t let it become an entitlement. When you hand out bonuses, make a point of explaining what they’re for. Your reasons should be objective, measurable, and relevant to employee performance and action. Emphasize—diplomatically—that the bonus is a reward for a specific accomplishment or set of achievements, not part of an ongoing program. Finally, don’t delay giving bonuses until the end of the year. You may create a sense of expectation that will work against you if bonuses aren’t forthcoming. Reward people as soon after their achievement as practical, and you’ll build a strong linkage between action and bonus.

Source: www.managesmart.org

Building a strong team

To build a strong team, don’t rely on a haphazard approach. Be proactive. Be purposeful. Learn about what makes a team strong, and then change your leadership approach, as needed, to help your team grow stronger. Resist the urge to micromanage—autonomy is important to high-achievers—and give appropriate freedom with assigned responsibilities. By rewarding great work and effort, and building rapport, yourself, with individual team members, you’ll unify, connect, and encourage your whole team.

Source: Source: Dmitry Davydov, October 2015

Emphasizing to drive better performance

Leaders who bring out the best in others listen to what team members are saying and put themselves in their shoes, says Richard S. Wellins, co-author of Your First Leadership Job: How Catalyst Leaders Bring Out the Best In Others. When dealing with an emotional situation, listening and responding with empathy can immediately reduce tension, and until things calm down, nothing productive can occur. Empathy will drive better performance; this is a huge motivator, adds Wellins.

Source: By Stephanie Vozza

Valuing and recognizing workers

In any organization, there are times that workers may feel devalued and unrecognized and there are many reasons for such. These reasons include inequality of pay for similar work, not being acknowledged for a job well done, being treated with disrespect, having their differences regarded as negative rather than prized, not receiving the right resources, and having to work in an unacceptable physical work environment are a few. When such a situation happened, expect umpteen talented employeers will leave your company looking for a company that will value them.

Source: Association Now

A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit.

—Arnold H. Glasow

Retaining client, customer, sponsors and donors

The key to retention of any client, customer, sponsor or donor is to ensure that you deliver a complete positive end to end experience, writes Richard Woodward, http://www.richardwoodward.com.au/. Woodward enumerates 3 steps for ensuring that you deliver a positive end to end experience: First, map out the sequence of interactions that you have with your clients, customers, sponsors and donors, that is, each stage of the experience they have with you where you have the potential to delight or frustrate. Be as specific as possible - ensure every stage is included. Second, consider how you can improve their experience at each stage. Importantly ask your clients, customers, sponsors and donors about their current experience and the ways they think it can be improved. According the Woodward, few organisations do this effectively. Some, like hotels, give out feedback forms (but how often do you fill those in). How many actually ask (verbally) with a genuine desire to find out the answer with a view to making improvements. Third, take the necessary steps to improve where required.