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So, you want to organise regular meetings

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This knowledge pill presents some ideas of how to organize and conduct meetings for an effective management of knowledge

Meetings



Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-diverse-people-gathering-and-listening-to-lecture-3856020/>)

- Basic approach to facilitate:
 - updates on important issues
 - discussions of hot topics and generation of new knowledge
 - specific training
 - collective decisions
 - project-related coordination
 - etc.

Meeting is a common modality that is used to favour many different activities. Some are of general purpose (e.g. updates on important issues, discussions of hot topics) and others are specific (for example, special training, decisions that must be taken collectively, coordination of tasks in projects, etc.)

Typologies



Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-people-holding-each-other-s-hands-3184423/>)

- Formal vs. informal meetings
- Regular vs. occasional meetings
- Online vs. face-to-face

There are different typologies of meetings. Formal meetings are officially called and they are generally used to take decisions or to formally present results of projects or activities. They have generally a fixed agenda, and discussions are generally moderated.

Informal meetings have a less established structure and organization. Their purpose is to provide informal updates on a topic, to discuss and brainstorm new ideas, to find solutions that require free elaboration of knowledge.

Meetings can be organized on a regular schedule, or can be occasional and called just on purpose. People can meet face-to-face or online via a videoconference system (mixed solutions are also possible). In this pill, we especially focus on regular meetings as a way to implement effective knowledge management processes.

Regular meetings for knowledge management



- Ongoing training programs
- Dissemination of knowledge throughout the company

Source: Pexels
(<https://images.pexels.com/photos/273153/pexels-photo-273153.jpeg>)



Regular meetings can be used with various goals related to knowledge management. They can be part of an ongoing training program for employees, to keep the knowledge base of the company updated with the more recent changes in technologies, in business operations, in regulations, etc. External experts can be invited to lecture on advanced topics, or an internal lecturer can be chosen among the company most reputed professionals.

Regular meetings can also be used for the dissemination of knowledge throughout the company, for example with reference to «good» practices adopted by a part of the company that can be transferred to other departments. They can be used to periodically discuss new advancements that the company has to consider in its knowledge of technologies or markets to open new businesses and monitor competition.

On a more restricted basis, regular meetings can be organized to instruct employees on specific procedures or practices that the company uses or is going to implement. In this case, there is a transfer of knowledge to employees who also have to perform personal learning.

How to manage regular meetings: the organizers



Source: Pexels
(<https://images.pexels.com/photos/6373296/pexels-photo-6373296.jpeg>)

- Person or board in charge of the organization
- Open attitude
- Organizational capability
- Ability to interact with others
- Alignment with top management
- Balance with daily regular work



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How can regular meetings be organized to make the most out of the knowledge management processes?

A first point regards the organizers. It is advisable that a person or a board of people must be assigned the task to organize the program of the regular meetings, and decide the topics, the invited speakers, the way of managing discussions, etc.

This assignment must be decided carefully. The chairing person must have an open attitude towards this approach, and to new ideas and perspectives, and willingness to help others discuss and learn. At the same time, he/she must have good management and organizational capabilities and, finally, an ability to establish fruitful interactions with others.

Also, the organizers must work in connection with the top management, to align the meeting programs with the goals of the company.

This can be a time spending activity, and meeting organizers must find the right way to balance their daily work in the company with this assignment.

How to manage regular meetings: the topics



Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/photo/art-background-brick-brick-texture-272254/>)

- Meeting program with wider coverage
- Connection with the goal of meetings
- Need to attract attention and interest

Another point regards the choice of the topics or themes of the meeting program. Being not a one-shot but, rather, a group of meetings, these topics must have a wide coverage and, in any case, their selection needs some careful consideration. Topics also depend on the purpose of meetings. If these are instruction meetings, the topics directly stem from the current needs of the company. If they are generalist meetings, there is a need to select what can be of current interest for the company. Topics must attract the attention of participants, and must also bring something «innovative» to the audience that makes attendance worthwhile.

How to manage regular meetings: the speakers



Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/@bertellifotografia/>)

- Internal speakers: «experts» in the company who are happy to share knowledge. They must have attitude for public speaking
- External speakers: choice depends on the goal of meetings
- External speakers can have a cost



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Identifying and choosing the speaker(s) is another issue. Speakers can be internal – and in this case it is necessary to select the «right» person who has recognition of colleagues as a specialist in some field, and also attitude as effective speaker. Internal speakers must be asked to spend some of their time to share their knowledge with colleagues.

An external speaker can be a professional in a specific field, a university professor, or even an expert working for a supplier or a customer. This choice depends on the goals of the meeting program, for example a university professor can be appropriate for opening new perspectives, and a company expert to provide information on specific issues.

There is a question of cost and, also, of alignment with the «language» of the company, because the speaker must have the capability to involve participants in an effective way.

How to manage regular meetings: modality



Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/it-it/foto/persone-donna-tenendo-parlando-8761554/>)

- Face-to-face vs. online
- Online meetings: less costly and time effective, but active participation is more difficult
- Online meetings require good technical facilities and a meeting manager
- Face-to-face meetings are the best option for active participation but are more costly
- Blended modality is the most difficult to manage



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In the last years, all organizations have experienced the option of organizing online meetings. Today, this modality is somewhat preferred because it reduces cost of travel and is generally time effective. In contrast, it reduces the active attention of attendance and it makes it difficult to establish fruitful relationship between speaker and participants.

A third modality (called dual or blended – where some people attend in person and others online) is the most difficult to manage, and can be reserved for special cases or for favoring attendance of those people who can't be meet face-to-face.

Online meetings also require a proper video-conferencing platform with all the software facilities that are appropriate (e.g.: virtual whiteboard, videorecording, chat and instant questions, etc.). In addition to the speaker, there must be a meeting manager who checks what is happening online and coordinates Q&A sessions.

Generally, face-to-face meetings are still the most appropriate form for the people to be actively engaged. Clearly, it has a cost in terms of resources (e.g. rooms), time to spend, and travelling.

How to manage regular meetings: the style



- Formal or informal
- With active discussions or not
- Moderated or free
- Choice depends on:
 - Goal, topic and coverage of the meeting
 - Capability and preference of speakers
 - Age and attitude of participants
 - Adopted modality (e.g. online or face-to-face)



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Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/it-it/foto/donna-che-indica-alla-lavagna-3727511/>)



Meeting style can be formal or informal. Discussions can be welcome or not, and can be moderated or not. Active engagement of participants can be requested, or they may be just asked to attend and listen.

The preferable meeting style depends on a number of factors: the goal and topic of the meeting, the number of participants, the capability of the speaker, the age and attitude of participants, the meeting modality (i.e. face-to-face or online).

Re-cap



Source: Pexels
(<https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-draw-a-light-bulb-in-white-board-3758105/>)

- Regular meetings can be an important way to update the company's knowledge and disseminate it throughout the organization
- They require proper organization and management
- They require careful and reflected choice of: goal, topic, speaker, modality, style



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To sum up, regular meetings can be an important way to update the company's knowledge and disseminate it throughout the organization.

They require proper organization and management, which also implies some cost and time investment for the company.

They also require careful and reflected choice of several issues like goal, topic, speaker, modality, and style.

Sources and find out more!

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