

## Super Meeting Manners

By Rachel Wagner, March 2008

Did you know that 70% of all executive time is now spent in meetings? According to the people who attend those meetings, 49% of that time was utter waste. Almost half! No wonder people dislike going to “another meeting.” But here’s help: use these tips, whether you’re the moderator or attendee for a “super” meeting that leaves you time for some March Madness fun around the water cooler.

### First...the “3 Ps” for Meeting Moderators

#### 1. Be Prepared.

- Email an agenda to everyone ahead of time and bring extras to the meeting. People will appreciate knowing in advance what the purpose of the meeting is and what topics will be covered by whom. Ask people to review the agenda and come prepared with appropriate ideas and resources. The agenda should include the meeting location and list of attendees.
- Make sure all visuals and meeting supplies are in place. If a laptop is needed for meeting notes and minutes, designate one person for that responsibility. Then make sure the notes are shared with other attendees once the meeting is completed.

#### 2. Be Punctual.

- Start on time. Don’t repeat information for latecomers.
- Alleviate electronic distractions. As attendees arrive, have a Power Point slide that says they may use electronic devices until a specific time (the meeting start time).
- Finish on time to show that you value everyone’s schedule.

#### 3. Be Productive.

- Clearly state the purpose of the meeting and quickly review the agenda.
- Keep focused on agenda items only. Politely bring “rabbit trail” discussion back on track so all agenda items can be covered.
- Include a generous “technology” and restroom break if the meeting will be long.
- Assign follow-up tasks with clear completion times.
- Be sure to thank everyone for their participation and attendance!

### Then, if you’re attending a meeting ...

- Arrive a few minutes early.
- Greet those you know, and introduce yourself to those you don’t know.
- Don’t sit where the moderator or most important attendee will be sitting (usually at the head of the table.). If the moderator has an assistant who is attending, he/she

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will probably sit to the moderator's right.

- Refrain from talking to those around you during the meeting and keep electronic devices turned off.
- When you wish to speak, a slight hand gesture is enough for the moderator to recognize you in a small meeting. In a larger meeting, raise your hand to speak. Refrain from interrupting another speaker.

"Super" productive and efficient meetings are possible when you "mind your meeting manners"—hmmm—now about those basketball brackets.

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