

4 Top Tips on How to Take Meeting Minutes

Knowing how to take meeting minutes accurately and communicate them quickly is an invaluable business communication skill. Many hours are lost trying to remember who agreed to do what when badly written or worse, non-existent, meeting minutes are taken. Learn how to take meeting minutes effectively, in this short article.

Formal or Informal Meeting Minutes Format?

Formal meeting minutes formats are often governed by company policy, and must be recorded and communicated in a pre-determined way, such as company annual general meetings. If in doubt, ask for a copy of previous meeting minutes to establish the normal meeting minute format.

The Role of the Minute Taker

Your role as minute taker can affect how you interact during the meeting. Traditionally secretaries sat quietly taking notes, but chances are you will be expected to take part in the meeting AND take notes.

Top Tip - Make it easier to take good notes and provide valuable input by agreeing with the meeting owner what your role is. It's often best if the meeting owner, facilitator and note taker are 3 different people.

Choose Your Weapon Wisely!

There are plenty of gadgets to help you take better notes, for example you can type directly onto a laptop, use a voice recorder or even get hold of a white-board that prints what's written on it. But beware; even the shiniest, fastest laptop is worthless when the battery life-span is shorter than the meeting.

Top Tip - Always take a backup pen and paper!

Standard Meeting Minute Template

Meeting minutes normally include these elements as standard;

- Time, date and venue.
- Attendees and apologies from absentees.
- Key outcomes from the meeting - decisions made, actions agreed and open issues.

Top Tip - Remember who said what by making a named seat plan at the start of the meeting when introductions are made, and referring to it as necessary.

A good meeting will have a pre-prepared agenda, and all attendees will be clear about the meeting objective and expected outcomes. Use the agenda to structure your note-taking, and be prepared to clarify points as the meeting progresses.

Top Tip - Aim to record key themes not verbatim comments

Some meetings work better if the notes taken are available for all to see, for example on flip charts or on over-heads. If so, remember to take these notes with you and write up the meeting minutes while they are fresh in your head.

Belt and braces check and send.

Before you circulate the minutes, spell check and if necessary, ask the meeting owner to proof read the minutes. Well written, clear minutes, circulated in a timely manner are always well received!

These tips on how to take meeting minutes will increase the quality of any further meetings and increase the teams' effectiveness.

Find out more about effective business meetings in these articles;

[The Abilene Paradox: 7 Tips for Effective Communication in Business Meetings](#)

[7 Business Meeting Etiquette Tips](#)

[Tips on Business Meetings: Example Groundrules](#)

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