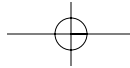

IS THIS MEETING NECESSARY?

Purpose

Too often, people get caught up in thinking, “We always have a project meeting Tuesday morning at 10,” or “We haven’t gotten the group together for a while,” or similar rationalizations for having a team meeting. Yet sometimes, deciding *not* to meet may be the best use of everyone’s valuable time.

Key Questions to Ask Up Front

- *Is there a clear purpose for the meeting?* “Developing a plan for responding to issues raised by the site investigator” is a clear purpose for a problem-solving meeting. However, for “Reviewing reports from sites,” a meeting may not be what you need at all.
- *Should we meet now?* It may be best to postpone the meeting if required information is missing, a critical member who should be present to explain a vital issue is not available, or an important organizational change is about to be announced.
- *Is there a better alternative?* If the purpose of the meeting is to communicate information such as status updates, it may be more efficient and just as effective to use an appropriate electronic method. Consider sending e-mail with an attachment or posting the information on the team space. If the purpose of the meeting involves only two or three members, perhaps an informal subgroup session would be a better alternative. If the purpose involves information gathering from some members, one-to-one meetings or telephone conversations with these individuals may be a preferred method.
- *What if the meeting is not held?* What would not be accomplished? How would team members react? How would senior managers react?



If the answers are “Nothing would be missed” or “There would be a loud cheer throughout the organization” (or both), you have your answer.

The general rule:

No Purpose = No Meeting!

Related Tools

- Preparing for Your Next Meeting (tool #2)
- How to Prepare an Action Agenda (tool #3)
- Planning an Off-Site Meeting That’s On Target (tool #9)

