

GETTING PEOPLE TO YOUR MEETINGS

As risk manager you know it can be difficult to get people to come to your meetings. One good way is to tell them you are going to draw money from their budget for risk management initiatives. That will get their attention! Maybe that's not funny – but you know that it's true – they would all be there. (And on time!)

We are all so busy with our own agendas that it can be hard to be interested in someone else's (risk management) initiatives. Especially true when it's hard to see 'what's in it for me? Try a pragmatic approach – design meetings that embrace your colleague's ideas, opinions and needs. Only address issues that are relevant to them. With that in mind here are a few things that can increase attendance at your meetings.

Choose Convenient Times

Above all, pick a time and location that's convenient for colleagues. Otherwise, not only will they not want to come - they just won't show up. This is one situation when using an automated scheduler can be valuable. If you know colleagues likely use automated schedulers you can quickly see what times to avoid and which is most likely to work for most of them.

Solicit Topics for the Agenda

Ask coworkers for ideas about how to improve meetings so that they get more benefits. Give them a chance to offer feedback to make your meetings more effective. Take time to address the issues specific to their business profiles.

Stick to the Agenda

Send out an agenda in advance – and cultivate a reputation as someone who not only sticks to the agenda but as someone who keeps attendees on track in order to make the meeting work for everyone. One way is to restrict adding topics to the agenda unless it is absolutely time-sensitive and must be addressed now. People who dread it when discussions get off topic appreciate the ability to address agenda items and finish the meeting on time. And you will maintain control of the meeting!

Food!

Food can be a powerful persuader. If your budget allows, let coworkers know that there will be hot/cold beverages and goodies available. This can encourage colleagues, who may not have time for a 'real' coffee break, to attend your meetings and may also provide a brief team-building activity. When special occasions (e.g. Christmas, Easter,



*“Talent wins games but
teamwork wins
championships.”*

Michael Jordan

Labour Day) approach try incorporating a treat that represents the holiday.

Try a Different Meeting Format

Meetings that are always held in the same format get stale and boring. Try introducing variety to meeting agendas. If your meetings are small, and much of the time is spent talking, why not sit at a table under a shade tree on a sunny afternoon? Or going for a walk around the block? Maybe it's time to let someone else lead the discussion on a topic they are most knowledgeable about. Try a video or group activity instead of PowerPoint. Changing the approach from time to time helps to keep meetings fresh.

Use the Meeting to Promote Risk Self-Management

Having groups of coworkers together is an opportunity to (subtly) promote their self-management of their affairs. Use discussions to encourage attendees to report how they deal with risks unique to their line of work. Many risk management tools can be adapted to work in other areas. When you establish a safe atmosphere in meetings these discussions will let colleagues a chance to hear tales of the mistakes, and experiences of, others.

At the End of the Meeting

Finally, be sure to summarize what was decided, who is accountable for carrying out which actions, and how everyone will learn the results. Everyone needs to leave understanding what was agreed on to prevent re-hashing the same issues later. Even 'one-off' meetings (not part of a regular process) need to be summarized in writing as a follow-up to attendees so that everyone has a record of what was discussed and agreed on.

CONCLUSION

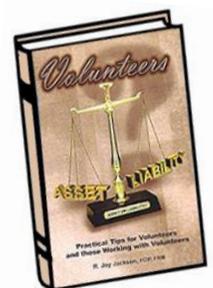
Remember attendance at meetings is just the beginning. You want, and need, engagement during the entire year.

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