

Quick Guide: The Perfect Meeting Participant

Meetings are a great opportunity for you to get noticed and to raise your profile within the firm. So it is vital that you know how to be the perfect participant who can confidently contribute at the right time. So here are the top ten tips to be better prepared to do this:

- 1. Be prepared.** Spend as much time as possible becoming familiar with the meeting you are about to attend. Find out who will be there. Is there any common ground between you and other participants? What can you read before the meeting to bring you up to speed? Look at the agenda – decide where you will be able to contribute and decide answers to questions you may be asked.
- 2. Be prompt and alert.** Arrive early and check out who's who as they arrive. Have a positive manner and approach by paying attention and concentrating on what others say. Listen to others; they will then be more prepared to listen to you!
- 3. Be involved** with the meeting. You will get more out of the meeting and it will also help build your confidence and credibility.
- 4. Plan what you are going to say,** to whom and when.
- 5. Prepare** how you propose to say it. Think about how you will capture the group's attention. It is a good idea to prepare the first few sentences so that you get off to a good start. Give an overview of your idea, then break it into key points.
- 6. Rehearse** what you are going to say. Practise saying the opening words and visualise a successful presentation. Having said this, do not have a script as you want to present your idea in a natural way as well.
- 7. Time your contributions.** Avoid the irresistible temptation to jump in as soon as an idea occurs to you. Listen carefully for the most appropriate time to contribute your ideas and opinions. Link to or build on what has already been said.
- 8. Signal your attention.** When you feel it is appropriate to say something, try to lead into it by engaging the group before you make the point you wish to make. For example, 'I'd like to ask a question about ...' or 'I'd like to add to Jake's point about ...'. This will effectively signal your intention and the group will then listen to your point rather than being caught unawares.
- 9. Speak up.** If you have something to say, say it loud and clear. Don't shout, but with a strong voice it will help to show your conviction.
- 10. Finally, maintain eye contact.** This will help you connect with the group and build rapport. You will show more confidence and belief in what you are saying.

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