

Meetings

A: So, how do staff meetings work in this department, then?

B: Well, we have them monthly, and everybody is supposed to attend. If we want to discuss something we tell the secretary beforehand, and she puts it on the agenda. We all receive this about a week before the meeting, along with the minutes of the last meeting.

We begin the meeting by signing a list of the people present, and the Chair reads out a list of the apologies received from people who can't come.

A: The Chair?

B: Yes, since our head of department is a woman, instead of saying "Chairman" or "Madam Chairman," we just say "Chair". Some people say "Chairperson" but "Chair" is shorter.

الاجتماعات

المتحدث أ: إذًا، كيف تتم اجتماعات العاملين في هذه الإدارة؟

المتحدث ب: حسنًا، تعقد الاجتماعات شهريًا ومن المفترض أن يحضرها الجميع. وإذا ما أردنا مناقشة شيء ما فإننا نخبر السكرتيرة مسبقًا، ومن ثم فإنها تضعه على جدول الأعمال. ويتسلم الجميع جدول الأعمال قبل الاجتماع بأسبوع مرفقًا به محضر الاجتماع السابق. ونبدأ الاجتماع بالتوقيع على قائمة بالحضور؛ ثم تقوم الرئيسة بقراءة قائمة الاعتذارات المتسلمه من الذين لن يتسنى لهم المجيء.

المتحدث أ: الرئيسة؟

المتحدث ب: أجل، حيث إن رئيس إدراتنا امرأة وبدلاً من أن نقول «رئيس» أو «مدام رئيس»، فإننا نقول «Chair» (شاغل الكرسي). وبعض الناس يقولون «Chairperson»، ولكن كلمة «Chair» أقصر. وعادة ما يكون أول بندين في الاجتماع

The first two items are usually to ask the meeting whether everyone approves of the agenda, and of the minutes of the previous meeting. If necessary we then discuss matters arising from the minutes.

We then go through the items on the agenda. The last one is always A.O.B., or Any Other Business, so we can add things that haven't been included on the agenda. For important discussions, if we can't reach a consensus we have a vote. If there's tie, if the votes are even, the chair has a casting vote.

A: And if you can't be there, can you ask someone else to vote for you?

B: Oh no. We don't have proxy votes. You have to be there. Especially we need 50% of the staff to have a quorum, without which nothing can be voted on and no decision can be taken.

A: And you have them once a month?

B: Well, I suppose we could call an emergency meeting if there was something urgent to discuss, but it hasn't happened recently. You know, most of us work individually, we have our specific jobs to do, and we don't need to discuss too many things with the whole department, we collaborate informally when necessary, like we're doing now, and only have meetings to discuss things that concern everybody.

هما السؤال عما إذا كان الجميع يوافق على جدول الأعمال ومحضر الاجتماع السابق. وإذا ما دعت الضرورة فإننا نناقش أموراً يطرحها محضر الاجتماع.

ثم نتناول بنود جدول الأعمال. آخر هذه البنود دائماً ما تكون (أخرى). وبذلك يمكننا أن نضيف أشياء لم يتضمنها جدول الأعمال. في المناقشات المهمة، إذا لم نستطع التوصل إلى إجماع فإننا نلجأ إلى التصويت. وإذا ما كان هناك تعادل، أي أن الأصوات متساوية، فإن الرئيسة لها الصوت المرجح.

المتحدث أ: وإذا لم تكن موجوداً في الاجتماع، هل يمكنك ان تطلب من أحدهم ان يصوت بالنايية عنك؟

المتحدث ب: بالطبع لا. فليس لدينا تصويت بالوكالة، إذ يجب أن تكون موجوداً، خاصة وأننا نحتاج لحضور 50% من العاملين ليكون لدينا النصاب القانوني، دون ذلك لا يمكن التصويت على شيء ولا يمكن اتخاذ قرار.

المتحدث أ: وهل الاجتماعات مرة واحدة في الشهر فقط؟

المتحدث ب: حسناً، أعتقد أنه باستطاعتنا أن ندعو لاجتماع طارئ إذا ما كان هناك أمر عاجل للمناقشة، إلا أن هذا لم يحدث مؤخراً. كما تعلم، فإن معظمنا يعمل بشكل منفرد، إذ لنا أعمالنا المحددة التي نقوم بها ولسنا في حاجة لمناقشة الكثير من الأشياء مع كل الإدارة، ونحن نتعاون بشكل غير رسمي عند الضرورة كما نفعل الآن، ونجتمع فقط لنناقش أموراً تتعلق بالجميع، وإلا

Otherwise, meetings are a waste of time. I still remember a line from Peter Drucker, the management theorist. He once wrote, "You can either work or meet. You can't do both at the same time".

أصبحت الاجتماعات مضيعة للوقت، وأنا لا أزال أذكر عبارة للمنظر الإداري بيتر دركر الذي كتب ذات مرة «إما أن تعمل وإما أن تجتمع، ولا يمكن أن تفعل كلا الأمرين معاً في ذات الوقت».

Definitions:

Agenda: The official list of items to be discussed at a meeting.

Minutes: a written record of what was said at a meeting.

Casting vote: a vote, usually that of a chairperson, used to decide an issue on which voting is equally divided.

Quorum: the minimum number of people who must be present at a meeting so that it can take official decisions.

Lesson 7: Exercises

Meetings

First Question: Fill in the spaces form the words between brackets:

1. We (**begin-end-cancel**) the meeting by signing a list of the people present.
2. Since our head of department is a woman, we say (**Chairperson-woman-mam**).
3. The first two items are usually to ask the meeting whether everyone (**disapproves-signs-approves**) of the agenda, and of the (**chair-minutes-people**) of the previous meeting.
4. The last item on the agenda is always (**C.E.O-A.O.B-M.D**).

5. If we can't reach a consensus we have a **(vote-fight-chair)**.
6. If there's tie, if the votes are even, the chair has a **(no-casting-new)** vote.
7. We could call an emergency meeting if there was something **(normal-urgent-voted)** to discuss.
8. An agenda is the **(official-informal-urgent)** list of items to be discussed at a meeting.
9. A written record of what was said at a meeting is called **(agenda-minutes-quorum)**.
10. **(agenda-minutes-quorum)** is defined as the minimum number of people who must be present at a meeting so that it can take official decisions.

Second Question: Match:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1- Casting vote | The official list of items to be discussed at a meeting. |
| 2- Quorum | A vote, usually that of a chairperson, used to decide an issue on which voting is equally divided. |
| 3- Minutes | The minimum number of people who must be present at a meeting so that it can take official decisions. |
| 4- Agenda | A written record of what was said at a meeting. |

Third Question: Translate the following into Arabic

1. We then go through the items on the agenda. The last one is always A.O.B., or Any Other Business, so we can add things that haven't been included on the agenda. For important discussions, if we can't reach a consensus we have a vote. If there's tie, if the votes are even, the chair has a casting vote.
2. We collaborate informally when necessary, like we're doing now, and only have meetings to discuss things that concern everybody. Otherwise, meetings are a waste of time. I still remember a line from Peter Drucker, the management theorist. He once wrote, "You can either work or meet. You can't do both at the same time".