

Hi ho, hi ho, It's Off to Another Meeting I Go

Spent any time in meetings lately? Wish you could get any of that time back? If you're not leading - or participating in - meetings that make a difference, that are worth your time and (dare we say it) FUN; there is hope.


Leadership expert Kevin Eikenberry says there are real "effect the bottom line reasons" for making meetings more fun. Things like teams that are more engaged in their work, increased communications, improved working relationships, increased energy and increased memory and retention. Eikenberry offers these tips for making meetings more effective - and FUN:

SET A FUN EXPECTATION. Let people know that it is OK to have a little fun in a meeting. In fact, let them know that is your preference, as long as the meeting's objectives are still reached.

SET THE ATMOSPHERE. Atmosphere can loosen people up and allow them to be in a more relaxed and open state. Consider playing fun, upbeat music before the meeting starts, or find a funny cartoon and share it with everyone at the start of the meeting (or project it on the screen for people to see).

ENGAGE THEIR BRAINS. Do a quick trivia question or a quick little puzzle exercise. Award the winner a candy bar or something else very simple. Beyond the fun, you now have people's brains ready to work, getting them past any mental cobwebs that they may have brought in with them.

MOMENT OF APPRECIATION. Give people the chance to thank others in the room for any help they have been to them or to otherwise express their appreciation. This is a powerful way to set a new frame of reference for teams and sets a meeting up for greater collaboration. While this isn't fun in a traditional sense, it will bring an important and enjoyable element to your meetings.

TOYS ON THE TABLE. Give people something to play with. Many people are fidgeters. In a strange way, when you give them something to do with their hands they will remain more engaged in the content of the meeting. Koosh balls, Nerf balls, clay or Silly Putty all work great. Once you begin thinking about it and looking for things, you will find other items that will work. 

Kevin Eikenberry is the author of Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at a Time (www.RemarkableLeadershipBook.com). He has spent more than 15 years working with people at every level within organizations like American Red Cross, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company, Great Lakes Energy, IHOP, OPTI Canada, Purdue University, Southwest Airlines, and the U.S. Marine Corps.

