Handouts for Mastering the Art of Minute Taking

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Meeting Best Practices

If you are involved in meeting planning, the first thing you need to determine is who is the leader in the organization of the meeting (Are you organizing the meeting for your boss or are they a participant?). In both cases there is something for you to do.

Leader: (You are organizing the meeting for your boss)

If your boss has called the meeting then you need to find out when the meeting needs to be held, who needs to be there, purpose of the meeting and what materials they will need. Once you have these details you can start the scheduling process to find a convenient time for everyone.

- Before you canvass all the meeting participants for dates, you need to ensure the people who need to be there are available. If you are organizing it, it is usually because your boss needs to be there so the first place would be to check his or her calendar (and the calendar of any others who need to be there such as the Chair or key players who need to be there) and find three or four dates that work.

- If the meeting is onsite you also need to check that there is meeting space available (or if it is offshore that hotel meeting space or another venue is available) on the dates you are looking at. Travel time also needs to be accounted for. Whether it is overnight travel or going across town you need to keep that in mind for your available dates. Once you've looked at all that you can then offer the dates to check for availability.

- Put all dates on hold in your boss’s calendar.

- When a date is found that works for the main players you then need to canvass the rest of the participants with the dates.

- Once a date is chosen you need to communicate that information to the participants by sending out a meeting request or emailing the date to participants and booking the meeting space.*

- Take the dates you didn’t use off hold.

- You are responsible to make sure the agenda and any meeting materials are sent out and on time (this will mean following up with the Chair to ensure you have it in time). Sometimes you are required to draft the agenda for the Chair’s approval.

- If it is a telecom (Webex or videocom), you need to provide call-in number and the participant code to the participants and ensure someone is the moderator for the call. You will need to provide the moderator with the moderator number (or if you are moderator to have the information on hand). You should assume you will be the one setting it up so make sure you know how to.
• You should ask if a presentation is to be made. If so, you need to make sure you follow up to get the presentation materials in time to load onto the boardroom laptop (or bring it on a memory stick) and include it in the meeting package. If the boardroom laptop is being used for a presentation and you record minutes electronically, you will need to bring a laptop for yourself.

• You are also responsible to make arrangements for catering and for any a/v requirements, etc.

Participant: (Your boss is a participant only)

If you are not the organizer, you still have responsibility to provide your boss’s availability in a timely manner and hold the dates in your boss’s calendar. When a date and location is chosen, accept the meeting request or put the date and location in their calendar. You should set a reminder to ask for any meeting materials before the meeting and if it is a teleconference, make sure your boss is aware of the call-in numbers. Always ask yourself, “What would I need if I was going to the meeting?” and then make sure your boss has it.

Below are some questions you should have answers to when someone wants your boss to be at a meeting (if the information is not already in the initial email requesting the meeting):

1. What is the purpose of the meeting?

2. Does your boss need to be at the meeting? Can someone go in his or her place if they are not available?

3. What dates and times are available (keep in mind time zones for away meetings)?

4. If the meeting is accepted, what does your boss need for the meeting and who will be in attendance?

Once you have confirmed your boss’s attendance:

• Secure the date and time in his or her calendar, taking into consideration travel time if outside the office. (For example, if the meeting is across town and takes 15-20 minutes to get there, I book 30 minutes for travel at the beginning of the meeting time and at the end to ensure that they have the necessary time to get there and that I don’t book something else back to back).

• State the purpose of the meeting in the calendar appointment as well as who will be at the meeting (i.e. Meeting with Mr. Brown and Ms. Smith to discuss strategies for upcoming marketing conference).

• Follow up with the meeting organizer to request agenda and/or meeting materials, pre-reading, etc.

• If it is an internal meeting, has the meeting space been booked? Do you need to book it or were you provided with the location. Enter these details in your boss’s calendar.
• If it is an external meeting, but local, enter location of meeting in calendar, provide your boss with address and directions, contact phone number, taxi chit, etc.

• If outside the city, make travel arrangements: are flights required, train or will he or she be driving. If flying, which is the best airport to fly into, is a hotel room required (make sure the hotel is close to the meeting location) is a map required for directions once they get there. Provide a contact number.

• Ensure that prior to the meeting you have received everything your boss will need, which may require follow up with the meeting organizer.

• Prepare a meeting package for your boss and bring it forward prior to the meeting to give them adequate time to review (hardcopy or electronic depending on your boss’s preference).

*Note: If the meeting participants are from various time zones and are physically going to travel to the meeting, I find it is better to send the meeting participants an email with the meeting coordinates that they can enter into their own calendars. Otherwise, once they accept the meeting request it will go into their calendar and convert to the time zone where they accepted it (i.e. New York). When they travel to the meeting location (i.e. Los Angeles), the meeting time that is in their calendar will not convert to the new time zone and unless they have noted it, they will be confused as to the time of the actual meeting. It is better if they put it in their own calendar for the meeting time and then when they get to the new time zone, they know it is whatever time is in their calendar but in the new time zone. Until Microsoft or some other company finds out how to handle this better, this is my best fix. If it is a teleconference meeting, this does not apply since everyone will still be in their own time zone and it will convert to their time zone and will be the right time they need to call-in (unless your boss is travelling, then you will need to do the same as I noted above). It gets really tricky when they are travelling from time zone to time zone and have a quick telecom at the airport, but I won’t confuse the issue here by discussing that.
Chairperson/Recorder: Wish List for Minute Taker

The Chairperson and Recorder should work together to ensure a good meeting experience as it is in the best interests of all meeting participants to have productive meetings and accurate notes. Below is a list of things that would be helpful to the Recorder and things the Recorder should endeavor to do.

Chairperson/Recorder Initial Meeting:

- Provide details of the meeting (preferred dates/location etc.)
- Go over what will be needed at the meeting (A/V, catering, etc.)
- Draft agenda (provide clear purpose and outcome for meeting) and go over the materials that will be needed and by whom

Chair - During the meeting:

- Provide meeting guidelines: Only one person speaking at a time, speak clearly, if a telecom, ask them to state their name when speaking
- Restate decisions/actions with delivery dates and person responsible
- Interrupt tangents and keep the group on topic and focused

Recorder – Before/During and after the meeting:

- Canvass meeting participants for dates, if necessary
- Book hotel/arrange flights, if needed
- Make sure boardroom is set up as required (A/V, catering, table set up, etc.)
- Sit close to Chair (should be in good hearing range and be able to make eye contact)
- Raise hand if unclear about any decision/action and bring to Chair’s attention if an agenda item is missed
- Provide timely and accurate minutes to the Chair for review and approval
HANDOUT 1 – Operational Agenda

Agenda Senior Leadership Team  
[Insert date, time and location]

Attendees: Regrets:

Absent:

Guests:

Recorder:

1. **Adoption of Agenda** *(If any new items come up they can be put under New Business below. The agenda would then be adopted as amended.)*

2. **Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes**

3. **Business Arising:** *(Brief updates on items in the previous minutes)*

4. **New Business**

5. **Strategic Focus** *(Strategic plan, annual objectives and budget, environmental risks/opportunities)*

6. **Management Performance Focus** *(Integrated management of business functions, monitor performance and business activities, review and approve reports for Board, review and implement Board decisions, assess and approve major projects/opportunities, seek advice on significant matters)*

7. **Staff Communication**

**Additional Recurring Agenda Items** *[For items that are either standing items or recur on a regular basis]*

- Review of Strategic Directions and Objectives (to be reviewed by leadership team prior to Board meeting)
- Review of financial statements (after 10 business days each month)
- etc.
Board of Directors’ Meeting  
October 21, 2008  
[Insert location]  
8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

8:30 a.m   In-Camera Session
9:00 a.m   Regular Meeting

Tab

1) Approval of Agenda (Motion Required)
2) Approval of Minutes (Motion Required)
3) Business Arising
4) Committee Reports
   a. Executive Committee Report
      • Tabling of Minutes
      • Chair Vacancy
      • Annual Report
      • Report on Board of Professional Development
   b. Nominations & Governance Committee Report
      • Tabling of Minutes
      • Board Vacancies Update
      • Committee Membership
   c. Finance Committee Report
      • Tabling of Minutes
      • Tabling of Financial Statements for September 30, 2008
   d. Audit Committee Report
      • Approval of Audit Report (Motion Required)
   e. Report of the Corporate Secretary
      • Report from Chair of Alumni

5) Chief Executive Officer’s Report
   • Strategic Directions 2008/09 Second Quarter Update

6) Next Meeting
7) Adjournment
The meeting was called to order at [Insert Time]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Topic and Discussion</th>
<th>Decision/Action</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Key Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Adoption of Agenda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The agenda was adopted as presented [or amended/corrected]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The minutes were adopted as amended [or presented/corrected]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>[Insert items in the same order as on the Agenda]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting was adjourned at [Insert Time]

Signed by:

__________________________________________
Chair

__________________________________________
Secretary
MINUTES OF THE [INSERT NAME] BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Monday, June 28, 2010  
Fairmont Le Château Frontenac Salon Rose Boardroom  
1 rue des Carrières, Québec City, Québec G1R 4P5  
8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (8:00 a.m. In-Camera Session)

PRESENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOARD MEMBERS</th>
<th>STAFF MEMBERS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name], Chair</td>
<td>[Insert name] – Deputy Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
<td>[Insert name], Recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
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<td>[Insert name]</td>
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<td>[Insert name]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS</th>
<th>REGRETS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF MEMBERS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name] – Deputy Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Insert name], Recorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GUESTS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Finance (for Finance item only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Chair (For Alumni Report only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An in-camera meeting was held prior to the regular Board meeting.

The meeting was called to order (or convened) at 9:30 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda. [Or a Consent Agenda can be used and items such as adoption of agenda and adoption of previous minutes etc. can be handled under the Consent Agenda]

MOTION # 01-06-10: That the Board accepts the Agenda for the meeting of June 28, 2010 as presented.

Moved: [Insert name]  
Seconded: [Insert name]  
CARRIED

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION # 02-06-10: That the Board accepts the Minutes of the meeting of March 4, 2010 as presented.

Moved: [Insert name]  
Seconded: [Insert name]  
CARRIED

3. Adjournment
There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2 p.m.

Notes Approved By:

_______________________________________  ________________________________________

[Name], Chair                         [Name], Corporate Secretary

*I hope you can see that by preparing your template ahead of time, you are making your job much easier as much of the minutes can be prepopulated.*
Anything that is required to be approved or dealt with at the meeting should be on the Look-Forward agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review and approve annual budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic/Business Planning &amp; Budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review and approve annual strategic and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit Requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approve appointment of auditors and their</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approve audited financial statements and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Receive and approve reports of Chairs of</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation in Chair and CEO Review Process</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### HANDOUT 6 - Senior Leadership Team
#### Action Registry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items from June 2 meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To share paper to Divisional team on drinking and driving once received by researcher</td>
<td>J. Quinn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To review options regarding release of alcohol tax paper and provide team with views</td>
<td>C. Albert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items from June 16 meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To contact new minister of intergovernmental affairs regarding northern crisis</td>
<td>J. Lavictoire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items from June 30 meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To check availability of Mr. Brown to speak at the February Board dinner.</td>
<td>R. Brown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attendance Sheet

**Quorum 50%+1 = 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name (or initial)</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Regrets</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 [insert name], Chair</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 [insert name], Treasurer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 [insert name], Committee member</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 [insert name], Committee member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Left meeting at 2, quorum still maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 [insert name], Committee member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 [insert name], Committee member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 [insert name], Committee member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 [insert name], Committee member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To-Do List</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Space Booked</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Visual (screen, microphone, projector)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleconference phone (call-in numbers/moderator code/instructions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access arranged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone (Do you require long distance access?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardroom table set up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop for Minute Taker and plug in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop for PowerPoint Presentation/Pointer (batteries)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee/Tea or Lunch/Dinner ordered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notepad and pen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra pens, highlighter, sticky notes, paper, meeting packages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank tent cards and name tags</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank Motion Sheets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clipboard (especially useful when meeting off site)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Sheet</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting by-laws, terms of reference or rule book for minute taker and the Chair</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Administrative Team (AT) is committed to supporting the goals and objectives of the organization by providing professional administrative support while striving to exemplify [name of organization’s] values to team members and work colleagues.

**Mandate:** The AT is responsible for providing professional administrative support. To do so, it will:

- work as a team to ensure the deliverables of the organization are met;
- provide support to team members as required;
- deliver high quality products;
- participate, make suggestions and provide education and sharing of expertise;
- provide a forum for its members to seek advice on matters of significant impact to the organization as it pertains to the discharge of their respective duties.

**Credo:** AT members believe and commit to: being present, on time and prepared for meetings; to vigorously debate and challenge issues for consideration with a focus on finding solutions rather than problem identification; to trust and learn from one another; to embrace risk while acknowledging the reality of failure as a learning experience; to accept and discharge their obligations as members in a fair, transparent and professional manner.

**Membership:** The AT shall be composed of the following:

- Senior Executive Assistant to the CEO (Chair)
- Rotating AT members (Recorder)
- Executive Assistant to the D/CEO (Alternate Chair)
- Facilities and Executive Office Administrative Assistant
- Human Resources Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant, Communications and Corporate Services (Vacant)
- Administrative Assistant, Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Administrative Assistant, Partnerships and Priorities
- Accounts Payable Coordinator

**Quorum:** Quorum shall be the Sr. EA to the CEO (or Alternate Chair) and at least three other members of the AT

**Meetings:** The AT will meet face to face on a monthly basis or at the call of the Chair. Divisional Updates will be sent to the team on a bi-weekly basis by email providing awareness, areas where we might need assistance and accomplishments/successes.
**Invitation of Staff:** The AT may choose to invite staff to any meeting for the explicit purpose of seeking their participation.

**Accountability and reporting:** All decisions will be recorded in the minutes and it is the responsibility of the appropriate AT member to undertake as decided. It is also the responsibility of individual AT members to follow up on any and all outstanding items they are responsible for. The Recorder is responsible for providing the Record of Decision to the Chair for review within two business days. Once approved, the Recorder will send the Record of Decision to the AT. Relevant information from the Record of Decision will be communicated as required by the respective AT member to their Divisional team.

**Confidentiality:** All confidential matters discussed at AT are to remain confidential unless communicated as a decision of the AT. In-camera discussion may be requested and where appropriate, decisions made at that time are to be recorded in the Record of Decision.
HANDOUT 10 - MINUTES

Nominations & Governance Committee Meeting
June 9, 2011 at 1 p.m. EST
By teleconference [Insert Dial in information and participant code]

PRESENT:  
B. Brown, Chair
R. Bradley
J. T. Franks
S. Steal

STAFF:  
M. Pound – Chief Executive Officer
P. Robb – Executive Assistant, Recorder

REGRETS:  
E. F. Bradson

The meeting was convened at 1 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda
MOTION #01N-06-11
To accept the agenda of June 9, 2011, as presented.
Moved: J. T. Franks  Seconded: S. Steal
CARRIED

2. Approval of Minutes
MOTION #02N-06-11
To approve the Minutes of March 28, 2011
Moved: J. T. Franks  Seconded: S. Steal
CARRIED

3. Board Vacancy
It was noted that E. F. Bradson’s last term will end on June 20, 2011. He is to be recognized at the Board dinner on June 13 and presented with a bronze statue.

The Committee reviewed the list of interested candidates for the Board vacancy. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that interviews will be scheduled as soon as possible with the intent to appoint a board member by the fall meeting.

ACTION
To proceed with scheduling back-to-back interviews with the successful candidates and to notify those who were unsuccessful.
(P. Robb)
4. Committee Membership
S. Steal agreed to sit on the Audit Committee until the full complement of members is appointed to the Board. At that time this item will be brought to the Chair of the Audit Committee to appoint another member in order that it is dealt with quickly.

5. Maternity Leave Policy
The Maternity Leave Policy was brought to the Committee for its annual review. It was noted the Board approved the policy in June 2010 as amended to include adoption benefits and this benefit has been well received by staff.

6. Other Business
No further items were brought forward for discussion.

Adjournment
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

[A motion is required to adjourn a meeting if not all the business was dealt with otherwise no motion is required (Please consult your own meeting rules for further clarity)]

MINUTES APPROVED BY:

____________________________________  __________________________________
B. Brown, Chair                       P. Robb, Corporate Secretary
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**Agenda topics**

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Use complete sentences

First draft of your notes within 2 hours. Review, edit and present Chair with final draft within 24 hours (the second time read with a critical eye for content (does it make sense), grammar, spelling, punctuation and formatting)

Schedule time in your calendar to transcribe the minutes

Names of people, organizations and places referred to in minutes should be checked for accuracy. You should also be consistent in how you refer to the meeting members. For example if you have their name written as P. Robb in the attendance record of the minutes, whenever you refer to them throughout the minutes, you should still use P. Robb.

Acronyms should be spelled out on first use followed by the acronym in brackets (i.e. World Health Organization (WHO)) then the acronym can be used afterwards

Read materials in meeting package so you are prepared ahead of time for what will be discussed at the meeting

Create a meeting template from the final agenda (i.e. Agenda can be set up in portrait and minutes in landscape with a space for text) (see Handout 3)

Prepare an attendance sheet with names of meeting participants and check off as people come in and/or depart the meeting (see Handout 7)

Do not use -th, -st, -nd and -rd (ordinal suffixes) on numbers in minutes, including dates

Avoid the use of we, you, they, them or their as much as possible in the minutes. Minutes are not personal, but are a reporting of what happened.

Examples:
The Directors recommended we use the current process until the new Production Manager is hired.

Better: The Directors recommended continuing with the current process until the new Production Manager is hired.

They are to make the changes and report back at the next meeting. Better: Changes are to be made by the Directors and reported on at the next meeting.

Anything handed out at the meeting and not distributed in the meeting package should be attached to the minutes. Reference should be made in the minutes that a copy is attached. (i.e. A draft policy was handed out at the meeting and is attached to these minutes)

If taking minutes electronically, mute sound on computer

Handy phrases

The Director provided the participants with handouts (rather than ‘gave’)
The Chair raised the issue (rather than ‘brought up’ the issue)
The Chair introduced the topic
A presentation was made by/ There was a presentation on
Following the presentation there was discussion and questions/ There was discussion and questions following the presentation
• Discussion ensued/Discussion and questions ensued/There was discussion/Discussion occurred
• There was discussion and the following points were made:/The following points were discussed:
  (then list in bullet form)
• There was agreement on/The members agreed/It was determined
• The document was tabled
• The Chair indicated/The Chair noted/It was noted
• The policy was approved subject to the following changes
• Members were encouraged to
• This item was deferred to the next meeting
• This item was not discussed (when an agenda item is skipped over)
• There was nothing to report under this item.
• The document was tabled for review and discussion
• The Director of Finance reported on the financial statements
• The Treasurer provided a summary of the financial statements and it is attached to these minutes (if it was handed out at the meeting)
• The Director of Human Resources reported on the new hiring practices of the firm
• The Chair reviewed the briefing note with the Committee and discussion ensued
• Record when someone leaves the meeting early. For example: P. Robb departed the meeting. Quorum was lost or P. Robb departed the meeting. Quorum was maintained [When someone leaves a meeting it should be recorded in the minutes to ensure there is quorum at all times] If they depart for a short time (washroom breaks) you should just make a note of it for yourself to make sure you still have quorum and if a vote comes up and they are not back you will need to let the Chair know quorum has been lost. These short absences do not need to be recorded in the minutes, just when a meeting member leaves the meeting early.
• There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at [insert time]/The meeting was adjourned at [insert time]

Types of meetings

- Formal
- Operational
- In-camera
- Teleconference

How to list attendees

- Participants are those who attend the meeting
- Regrets are participants who advised you ahead of time that they would not be able to attend the meeting
- Absent are participants who did not show up for the meeting and did not provide notice
- Guests are those who are invited to the meeting and are not a regular participant
- The minute taker can be listed as the Recorder or the Minute Taker

What to record in the final minutes?
- A sentence (or two) for context and whatever the outcome of the discussion is. Minutes are a record of the discussion, decisions and actions to be taken and the date by when they need to be completed
- Ideas in bullet form from a brainstorming session

**What not to record in the final minutes?**

- If someone is corrected in a meeting they should not be singled out or the incident recorded in the minutes
- Heated debate, tangents or angry outbursts. “Discussion ensued” or “There was discussion” is appropriate to describe this
- He said/she said back and forth discussions. The meeting is a group meeting and the decisions are made as a group
- A presentation at a meeting. The only thing that needs to be recorded is that a presentation was made, by whom and any discussion or actions that came from it. If the presentation was not handed out ahead of time, it should be attached to the minutes and referred in the minutes that it is attached.
- Do not assign actions to people who are not at the meeting and will not be provided with the minutes. Assign the action to their representative in the meeting (director or manager) or assign it to yourself as the minute taker to advise the person of the action required. If a meeting participant is absent or sent their regrets then the action can still be assigned to them as they will receive the minutes. It would be courteous to email them to give them a heads up that they have an action item.

**When to speak up?**

The minute taker should speak up and bring a matter to the attention of the Chair if:

- items are skipped over on the agenda or not dealt with. You are helping the Chair as they may have missed it, and it is appropriate to bring it to their attention.
- the meeting is not a legal meeting (i.e. if quorum is lost (the required number of people are not at the meeting) or the Chair is absent) (You should be aware of your meeting rules)
- a motion is not made properly or you missed some of the wording or you are not clear whether it was carried/approved
- an action or agreed to item is not clear/the outcome of the back and forth conversation is not clear
- it is a teleconference and the speaker did not identify themselves or you did not hear what was said

**When not to speak up?**

Do not speak up and interrupt the meeting if you can ask someone later and the question is not important to the governance of the meeting. For something that can wait, you can write a note to yourself in your meeting notes to ask the meeting participant what they meant.