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Meetings

Take the time to have the majority of your talk committed to heart and head.

by **Bob Goshen**

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First let me say, I enjoy a productive meeting. There is nothing better than like-minded people coming together to address challenges. In a good meeting, the energy flows as the synergy increases. One person expresses a thought only to have another person pick it up and take it to the next level. When everyone is on the same page, it is easy to write a book.

However, the truth is that most meetings are boring and nonproductive, and the only flow of energy is that which is poured from the coffee pot combined with the sugar from the Danish.

In my work with Fortune 100 companies, I have had the pleasure of seeing wasted time (otherwise referred to as meetings) in action. I am confident that not all major corporations fall into this category, but a great number do.

It all begins when no parameters are set for what a meeting is supposed to accomplish. After that, the responsibility lies with the moderator or facilitator to make everything flow and to engage the participation of everyone in the room.

How many meetings have you attended where it was obvious that the moderator did not plan and practice? Yes, I said practice. If you are the person in charge of the meeting, it is your obligation to insure that everything is ready, and the only way you can be confident that everything will go well is to rehearse. Like any good speaker, you take the time to have the majority of your talk committed to heart and head.

> **The heart controls the "temperature" in the room, the passion. Being captured in a long meeting is bad enough, but being captured in a long meeting that has no "life" is torture.**

Passion begins when you enter the room with a smile and a handshake, when you look each person in the eye as you tell them how excited you are that they are there. You might say, "Bob, this is overkill in my office. We meet twice a week for a sales meeting." Here is my thinking, if you don't respect a person's time, they will never respect your wisdom.

Having people excited to be at the meeting is half the battle.

> **The head controls all the mechanics that make the presentation run smoothly. Focus on every detail.**

What type of equipment is needed for the presentation—laptop, screen, projector, remote? Have handouts ready so the folks can follow along. Assume that at any given time something electronic will break, so have a whiteboard and markers ready.

Once you have everything scripted, close off a room in your house or a corner in your office and put out the "Do Not Disturb" sign. Go over your presentation five or six times; commit it to memory. You owe it to those attending to have it right. When possible, be at the meeting venue one hour before you are to make your presentation. Get a feel for the room;

test the equipment; check the air conditioning (better cool then hot); and mentally go through the presentation.

The following procedures must be addressed prior to any meeting:

- **What is the purpose of the meeting?**
- **What are the goals?**
- **What measurements are we setting to determine positive growth?**
- **Who is mentoring the team for accountability?**
- **When will we meet for a follow up meeting?**

If you follow these procedures, you won't need as much "caffeine" and "sugar" at your next meeting.

Bob Goshen is a man who tells it like it is. It is obvious he is a man who has earned the right to talk the talk because he has walked the walk. He speaks with the innate authority of someone who has seen battle, and has the scar tissue to prove it. He understands leadership, at the intellectual level, at the heart level, and at the gut level. He knows what works, and what doesn't work. And more than anything else, he understands the power of leadership and the value of common sense in a high tech world where it is believed all problems can be solved with the keystroke of a computer. Check out more about Bob at his website: http://www.bobgoshen.com/