



Keyword: Meeting Accountability

# 10 Ways to Increase Meeting Accountability

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by Kevin Eikenberry

Of all the situations where people are concerned about accountability, few rank as high as meetings. For many people meetings are something to attend and make sure they don't leave with any action items (and hopefully grab a snack while they're there).

In most meetings, ideas and next steps are identified for a variety of situations, and yet far too often far too many of these actions don't get done on time – or completed at all.

As a leader there are a variety of things you can do to increase the likelihood that the actions identified in a meeting will actually get completed. Here are ten things you can do before, during and after meetings to increase the accountability of participants and improve the chances that the best ideas are found, and that those ideas get implemented!

## Before the Meeting

**Have an agenda.** If people know what is going to be discussed at the meeting they can come prepared. Having an agenda distributed before the meeting will improve your meetings and the resulting accountability immediately.

**Assign roles.** The agenda should not only describe the topics or desired outcomes, but the roles individuals will play. Giving people a role and letting them know beforehand will increase people's accountability for the success of the meeting.

**Provide clear expectations of all meeting participants.** People at a meeting are participants and not attendees! Let them know that you expect them to be engaged and contribute to the work of the meeting. Once you have implemented pre-meeting distribution of agendas you can begin to increase the expectations of people coming prepared and ready to contribute. This is a step towards accountability in itself and will lead to more things getting done in the meeting – so there will be fewer “next steps” to complete after the meeting is over.

## During the Meeting

**Capture all action items.** Have you ever been in a meeting where items were discussed but it was never completely clear if a decision was reached or a next step was agreed upon? These situations are a major cause of the frustrations people feel in meetings. Before moving to the next topic, record any action items!



## 10 Ways to Increase Meeting Accountability (continued)

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**Assign tasks with dates.** Before the completion of the meeting, all recorded action items need to have names and dates assigned to them. How can you hold people accountable if they don't know they are responsible for something? Improve this process even further by allowing people to volunteer for their assignments. People will be more likely to complete things when they had a say in the process!

**Present less, discuss more.** Too many meetings are purely presentations. While this is fine, this approach doesn't generate participation, engagement and accountability for next steps.

**Ask people for their opinion.** Don't just open the floor for discussion; ask specific questions to engage people to share their perspectives and opinions.

**Encourage participation of everyone.** Make sure everyone has their voice heard. Let everyone weigh in. This may require asking some people to speak less, and encouraging others specifically to share their thoughts.

### After the Meeting

**Publish a list of assigned actions.** Once the list of action items, names and dates has been created at the close of the meeting, send a copy to every participant. This reminder will aid in building accountability.

**Review progress at next meeting.** At the start of each meeting, make it a habit to review the action items from past meetings. If people are seen as missing their dates in front of their peers, soon they will begin getting some of these items completed. Call it peer pressure, reminders or whatever you wish, but it works!

Apply all of these tactics and you will increase the accountability people feel about meetings. Beyond that, and more importantly, you will have more effective meetings *and* get more done - both during and after the meeting.



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