

## **Tips for Innovative Meetings/ Events (T.I.M.E.)**

**Topic: Minimum/Minimal Meetings**

**August 2000 (the “Vacation” month)**

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### **1. MINIMAL MEETINGS**

August spells the ending of summer. I don’t want to see it end and so I want to squeeze the last bit of enjoyment out of summer and yet still be productive.

How can you insure you have productive and efficient meetings? In addition to the usual suggestions (have an agenda, set time parameters), here’s a list of off-the-wall ideas I have collected over the years.

While these ideas may not suit every meeting you plan or attend, I hope it gains you an extra hour or so of productivity so you can leave your office on time or even early during the month of August! Here’s the top 9 List:

1. Host the meeting standing up! People will stay alert and this unusual technique is sure to insure a speedy efficient meeting.
2. Use a Parking Lot to keep to the meeting agenda. If people raise ideas that are important to answer but either cannot be answered at that time or are not germane to the meeting topic, have them post the issue/question in a designated area (flip chart paper, area of the wall) using Post-It Notes. Have someone “distribute” the follow-up issues after the meeting.
3. Inject some humor and demonstrate some of the pitfalls of meetings using Actor John Cleese’s videos, Meetings, Bloody Meetings and More Bloody Meetings. These quick vignettes use Monty Python-style humor to make their points. Coast Training Technologies Corp is your source at 800-285-9107.

4. Charge people for being late to meetings. Micro-Age Computer based in Tempe, Arizona charges latecomers \$1 each; the money is then distributed to those who were on time. (Reported in CMI, June 200)
  5. Toss control of the meeting around. Use a ball as the tool for maintaining control over a meeting. Only the person holding the ball can speak. Throw or roll when you “relinquish” control. This could be fun in a meeting with audience participation!
  6. Make your meeting more of a sensory experience. What person is not attracted to the smell of freshly popped popcorn (Mmm, I love the butter smell) or freshly baked chocolate chip cookies? Lure them in. Or even use smell simply to create a theme or mood for the meeting. Don’t forget about your other senses too! People will remember more, stay more attuned to the meeting if you create more ways for them to remember the content of the meeting.
  7. Signal the end of meeting breaks with a musical instrument. Recorders, portable xylophones, or even a kazoo with a short, snappy tune will catch the attention of your meeting participants and keep your meeting on track.
  8. Especially effective in large meetings with small group activity and work - when you are ready to indicate its time for the group to “reconvene” at large, indicate by raising your hand. Instruct everyone in the audience when they notice you raising your hand to also raise their hands.
  9. Start and stop meetings at odd times. People are more likely to on time if the meeting starts at 9:05 than 9:00 am.
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## **2. HOW ARE MEETINGS LIKE VACATIONS?**

Vacations are often considered great times to “recharge” your batteries; taking a needed break from work.

An event or meeting (especially off-site) can create that same break from the day-to-day activities of a job. And in turn, meetings can often play a role in creating intangible benefits – creating similar revitalizing energy that comes from vacations.

During your next meeting, use the following list as a source for brainstorming about ways to create intangible benefits for meeting participants:

1. People want development (professional and or personal development linked to their career)
2. People want to stay current (or marketable)
3. People want to feel empowered; more buy-in is created when people feel they are part of the solution
4. People want to feel connected to the organization and culture

## 5. People want to be recognized

The more intangible benefits inherent in a meeting, the better the meeting and likely the better will be the hard-core tangible benefits (sales, revenue, employee turnover, recruitment statistics, quality measures, etc.)

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### 3. FREEBIES: WEB WINNERS

Recommendations of sites and services on the web to help your business, your meetings and yourself.

Email [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net) with the words "Web Winners" in the subject line and some new business ideas will be emailed off to you.

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### 4. FUTURE T.I.M.E.

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Sue Tinnish will actively present

"See, Hear, Experience and Feel:

Adult Learning Concepts for your Next Meeting"

during the ITME Motivation Show at

McCormick Place

The presentation is at 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm on Wednesday.

The show runs from Tuesday, October 10 - Thursday, October 12

Our September issue will talk about evaluations and evaluation forms for meetings.

We welcome any comments or suggestions about the newsletter or topics you would like to read about.

Please forward this newsletter to your associates and colleagues! Your recommendations are key to our success. Or anyone can subscribe by sending an email to [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net)

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