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MERDEKA

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WORK FROM HOME

To this day, the COVID-19 pandemic in the world has not been over. In fact, it has become a phenomenon and forced various parties to re-evaluate existing processes and organisations as well as their needs to fine-tune necessities to run work from home (WFH). One of the important requirements is to bring previous physical meetings to virtual channels as an important part of communication patterns among employees who need to work from home. Much working time is spent in meetings. Thus, organising meetings online is important for sharing ideas and finding solutions to problems. It has become a new norm during the pandemic to continue the process of sharing the organisations' operations management without having to be face-to-face. The Movement Control Order (MCO) has required us to enter virtual communications even though they have still been limited, which have required us to adapt to them no matter what. In fact, this is one way to break the COVID-19 chain. Organising online meetings requires orderly planning and following a specific process as it can take a long time as participants are in different locations. Despite this, advances in communication and technology, technical or connectivity problems, communication disruptions have remained number-one challenges to having effective online meetings. For example, they may find it difficult to have regular online meetings if several people need to talk at the same time. Even so, not all staff can afford to subscribe a fixed line of Internet, which provides a stable Internet

FEEDBACK

FOLLOW-UP

DURING ONLINE MEETING

PREPARING SUPPORT SYSTEM IN ADVANCE

STRAIGHTFORWARD AGENDA AND TIME DURATION

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STRATEGIC WAYS TO PRODUCTIVELY LEAD ONLINE MEETINGS

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connection with unlimited data. In a study, Cranshaw et al. (2017) have cited that scheduling meetings is a difficult task that requires communication, coordination, and negotiation among multiple parties. Reidsma (2007) has also summarised that the technological advances have created possible new opportunities in supporting meetings through the use of virtual reality. Therefore, some tips are suggested to help, especially those who serve as meeting hosts, to hold more productive online meeting as well as to practise an expected online behaviour. Among the strategic ways that can be applied closely are as follows:

Straightforward Agenda and Time Duration

Prepare a proper agenda with all issues to be discussed and sort them accordingly. This agenda should be distributed at least 24 hours before a meeting and confirmed that everyone involved receives it in advance via e-mail. Hence, the recommended meeting time is suggested not more than two (2) hours and 10-15 minutes per agenda. Google Calendar is a good example to be used as an automatic meeting reminder, thanks for Google that has allowed us to set up email reminders up to four weeks in advance of renewal deadlines (Shapiro, 2010).

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Preparing Support System in Advance

Choose a right virtual meeting platform or specialised application if they involve a large number of participants, such as Google Meet, Cisco Webex, Microsoft Team, or Zoom (Dash et al., 2021). However, for one-on-one meetings, you can use standard video-calling services, such as WhatsApp Call or Skype. Remind all participants to be ready at least 10 minutes before the meeting. Guide them to check their device settings, such as microphone and camera, as well as meeting software that can support multiple participants and, the most important part, which is, Internet coverage.

During Online Meeting

Advise all participants to use real names intended to facilitate the process of identifying the attendance of meeting members. Meeting moderators should remind

them of meeting ethics, such as:

- switching on their cameras to display faces of interest;
- keeping the microphone in silent (mute) mode when not speaking;
- not making recordings unless the person is required to do so with consent;
- keeping meeting links confidential to maintain privacy;
- avoiding noises and ensuring workspace is meeting-ready; and
- preparing the attendance (Google Form) for record.

Follow-up

Online-meeting sessions should necessarily be recorded. Most virtual-meeting platforms own useful recording tools, for instance, Google Meet and Zoom. It is to facilitate referrals to meeting members who need to return and refer to the recorded conversations in more detail for further actions. As a backup, you can appoint someone to record the results of the meeting because it is feared that there are technical problems during the recording. Furthermore, after the meeting, make sure the follow-up e-mail uses the same e-mail thread as the original meeting invitation to ensure that all the participants receive the outcome of the discussion, especially to the specific individuals who have

specific tasks to complete.

Feedback

At the end of each meeting, there is usually feedback. Basically, there are requests for meeting participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the meetings. The use of auto-generated surveys, for example, Google Form, is strongly encouraged. Each participant is required to provide anonymous feedback – in the form of suggestions for improvement to meeting organisers on how informative, necessary, completed, managed, and implemented the meeting has been. In addition, the participants can also make specific recommendations to the organisers. The feedback would then be collected as a 'meeting-effectiveness score'.

To recapitulate, online meetings have now been a part of our lives. Managing an organisation requires a new set of skills that combines online

behaviours, technologies, and work effectiveness. It is important to provide guidance for organising meetings, especially for internal staff. Thus, these tips are hoped to be beneficial and help everyone to organise meetings smoothly. Thus, a system of training, encouragement, and motivation can help to empower all to meet the expectations of online engagements – not just for now but for the success of the organisation, staff, and our future careers. On the positive side, the Internet-based, modern, working style could be more convenient and cost-effective compared to the traditional way, especially in handling meetings. In fact, the future will be led by hybrid workplaces, and, ready or not, employees and employers must get ready to it.

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