10 Do's and Don’ts for Productive Sales Meetings

1. **Do** plan and prepare meetings from a salesperson’s perspective. With every item on the agenda, answer the question, "What's in it for me?" from a salesperson's point of view.
   Do not use the meetings for a forum to discuss individual problems or other downers which don’t apply to the group as a whole.
2. **Do** start and finish the meeting with positive, upbeat topics. Have the salespeople each share a good news story about your company, your market, your products, a sale or a customer satisfaction story.
   Do not dwell on topics which do not pertain to the majority in attendance. Such topics should be dealt with one-on-one.
3. **Do** have an agenda, and circulate it to the staff ahead of time. This forces you to prepare for the meeting and gives your staff a chance to prepare for it as well.
   Do not be the only speaker on the agenda. . . From time to time, bring in other staff members, suppliers, experts, department heads or even customers to answer questions or help train the staff.
4. **Do** use multi-sensory materials, i.e. audio, video, grease board, hand-outs (articles, etc.).
   Do not simply stand in front of the room and communicate verbally.
5. **Do** recognize any group or individual staff accomplishments.
   Do not reprimand anyone at a meeting.
6. **Do** encourage participation. Assign certain topics to be presented or chaired by staff members, encourage questions, and as often as possible, compliment and thank them for their participation.
   Do not let the participation escalate into "mutiny sessions". Don't ignore complaints, but answer them quickly and move on, or suggest you’ll answer the concern in a one-on-one after the meeting.
7. **Do** have your sales meetings on the same day and time consistently. This way the staff can plan around them and you avoid the old, "I thought the meeting was next week" excuse. (By the way, if you are getting excuses for non-attendance, chances are your staff feels your meetings are a waster of their time.)
   Do not change the meeting day or time unless it's for a very good reason, and then never make a habit of it. Changing the meeting sends a signal that sales meetings are not important, and shows a lack of respect for your staff's time. Also, never delay the meeting start time because an attendee is late.

8. **Do** keep meetings as short as possible, 1-hour max. Whether your meetings are 30-minutes or 1-hour, always keep them to that amount of time. Morning meetings are best. Research has proven the human mind is much more receptive, and retention levels are higher, in the morning.
   Do not try to cover too many topics at one meeting.
9. **Do** plan ahead and not just for the next week. Write down topic ideas for future meetings and then start gathering info. Create a file, then when you see articles, videos, or other ideas for effective training meetings, keep them in there. Prepare - Prepare - Prepare!
   Do not plan meetings the night or day before. It's a recipe for disaster. Your staff will not only notice it, but they will absolutely know it!
10. **Do** lighten up. Have surprise visits by Santa at a Chrismas sales meeting, or have coffee and birthday cake if a member is celebrating a birthday. Keep them fun!
    Do not limit attendance to "sales" staff. Everyone who has customer contact, from the receptionist to the accounts receivable clerk, should be invited when your agenda covers areas of interest to them.

Properly planned and executed meetings can be one of your most effective management and communications tools.

The litmus test is to ask your staff how they feel about sales meetings. If they say you have too many, they are too long, or they are in the 89% that think meetings are “usually a waste of time”, yours probably are!