

12 Tips To Improving Your Store Meetings

Here are twelve ways store managers and owners can improve their store meetings:

1. Give people plenty of notice before holding your meeting. Better yet, hold it at the same time every month (i.e., the first Saturday of the month, etc.). Attendance at least one meeting a month should be mandatory attendance unless someone is on vacation.
2. Ask your staff if there are any topics, issues, or opportunities they would like to discuss. Remember, it's a store meeting, not your meeting.
3. Have an agenda and stick to it. I've seen way too many store meetings either get off track or never really get started. Allot a certain amount of time to each item and then stick to it.
4. Have your management team and associates lead parts of the meeting. It is important that the store see your assistant(s) in a leadership role during store meetings. I like to also have each store employee contribute at least once a year, if not more often, to the store meeting.
5. Start the meeting off with a positive message. Hopefully it's the discussion about sales but it can also be "happy" customer stories, customer experience or mystery shop results, etc.
6. Be sure the meeting is a dialogue and not just a download from you. This also means that you need to facilitate the meeting to keep it on track as well as ensure everyone is participating. Ask questions and engage those who aren't actively involved.
7. Don't let it become a gripe session. It's amazing how quick a meeting can spiral down into a session complaining about a multitude of issues. Keep the focus on improving things rather than complaining.
8. One of the best tools to use in a store meeting is a force field diagram. This easy tool is a great way to resolve problems by weighing the pros and cons of any situation and come to a conclusion everybody can work with. You can use it on everything from how the staff takes lunch to deciding if your current marketing plan is working. Here's a great description of how to do a force field. [Link](#)
9. Never miss the chance to improve staff skills or product knowledge during a store meeting. Too often I see managers use the meeting to communicate things that just as easily could have been communicated in a memo. Use this in-person time to do some role-playing so that the staff can learn from each other. Reward those employees who participate with candy or gift cards.

10. End on time and don't run the meeting right up to the time to open the store. It upsets the customers to see the staff sitting around while they wait outside, and it's also hectic for the staff who has to open the store.
11. Always end on an upbeat note. People should leave the meeting feeling pumped up and ready to go. Don't get bogged down by one topic and spend all your available time beating it into the ground. The staff walks away from meeting like that annoyed or mentally tired, which is certainly not how you want them to feel as they head out onto the sales floor.
12. Follow up on any issues that were raised at the meeting. Nothing frustrates a staff more than to be asked their opinions and thoughts and then see nothing happen. If the staff raises an issue that you determine can't be changed at least go back and tell them so. A short memo a few days after the meeting is a great way to recap the session and bring closure to any outstanding issues

About the author: Doug Fleener is founder of the Dynamic Experiences Group. He is a veteran retailer with more than 25 years of hands-on retail experience with world-class retailers including Bose Corporation and The Sharper Image. He has also owned and operated his own specialty stores. His new book, *The Profitable Retailer: 56 surprisingly simple and effective lessons to boost your sales and profits* published by Acanthus Publishing is available at www.theprofitableretailer.com or at Amazon.

Doug is now president and managing partner of Dynamic Experiences Group LLC, a Lexington based retail consulting firm dedicated to helping retailers create unique customer experiences that results in higher sales and profits. Learn more at www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com or call Doug at 866-535-6331.

Fleener also shares his knowledge of experience based retailing in a series of custom key notes and workshops designed for stores, businesses, corporations, non-profits, and trade associations of all sizes. His casual style and quick wit make him not just a crowd pleaser but also an incredible motivator, encouraging people to take action and deliver extraordinary experiences to customers and employees alike. Learn more at www.dougfleener.com.