

# *Using The Action Agenda*



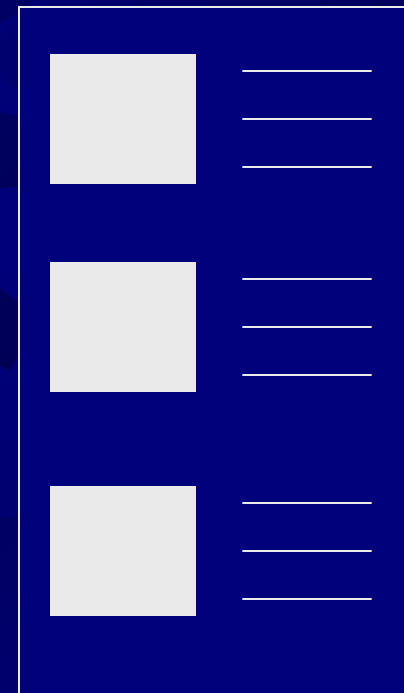
**A Structure for Creating Dynamic Meetings**

**Michael Brand, MNO**

Family Support and Community Development Coordinator

# Using PowerPoint Notes

- ✦ It's helpful to human learning to write notes
- ✦ Most slides are in the handouts, but not all (to save paper)





# Using PowerPoint Notes

If a particular slide is **NOT** in your notes, you'll see a **RED** box in the left corner

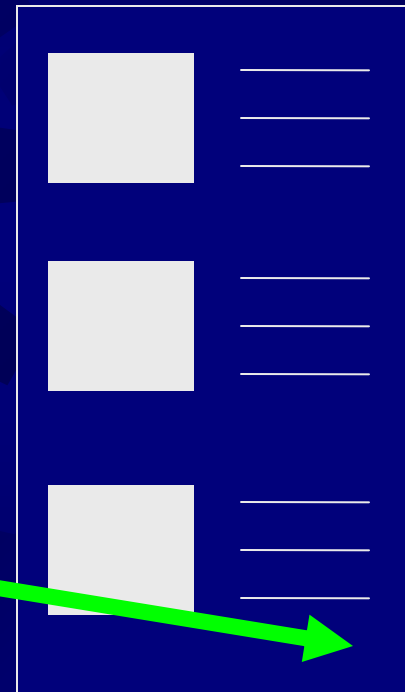
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# Using PowerPoint Notes

If the slide is in your notes, you'll see a

**GREEN**

box with the page number on which it appears



# Today's Goals

- ☀️ Comprehend the enormous costs of unproductive meetings
- ☀️ Know how “The Action Agenda” functions
- ☀️ Understand how “The Action Agenda” can help our meetings be more productive



1

**POLL:**

## **What's Your Biggest Time Waster?**

- A.** Clients with Trivial or Excessive Demands
- B.** Ineffective Meetings
- C.** Vague Objectives from My Supervisor
- D.** Poor Team Communication
- E.** Other



# Microsoft Productivity Research



- ★ Microsoft Office Personal Productivity Challenge
- ★ 38,000 employees and staff of sub-contractors
- ★ Far ranging survey of various employment and efficiency processes



# Top Three Timewasters

## 3. Poor Team Communication



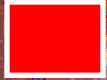
# Top Three Timewasters

**2. Vague Objectives**

**3. Poor Team Communication**

## Top Three Timewasters

1. Ineffective Meetings
2. Vague Objectives
3. Poor Team Communication



# How Many Business Meetings Are Held Each Day In America?

- A. 475,000
- B. 1.6 million
- C. 13 million
- D. 25 million
- E. 68 million



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Source Nicholas Romano and Jay F. Nunamaker, Jr.



# Today's Most Likely Meeting

- ★ Staff meeting
- ★ Nine people in attendance
- ★ They've had 24 hours notice
- ★ Held in the office conference room

*Source: Moncrief and Associates*



# Today's Most Likely Meeting

- ☀ Starts at 11:00 am
- ☀ It will last 90 minutes
- ☀ 15 minutes will be spent discussing items not related to the staff

*Source: Moncrief and Associates*



# % of Time Top Management Spends in Meetings

1985

22%

1 UCLA School of Communication & Univ. Of Minnesota Training and Development Research Center

2

## % of Time Top Management Spends in Meetings

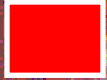
1985

22%

2005

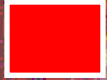
43%

1 UCLA School of Communication & Univ. Of Minnesota Training and Development Research Center



# POLL: How Much Time Do You Spend in Meetings Each Week?

- A. Less than 3 hours
- B. 3 to 6 hours
- C. 7 to 10 hours
- D. 11-15 hours
- E. 15+ hours



# How Much Meeting Time Is Wasted?

- ✦ Executive Survey
- ✦ CEO, COO, CFO level
- ✦ 1,387 participants

Source Nicholas Romano and Jay F. Nunamaker, Jr.

## How Much Meeting Time Is Wasted?



- ☀ 28% - 'Highly Productive'
- ☀ 21% - 'Somewhat Productive'
- ☀ 13% - 'Somewhat Unproductive'
- ☀ 38% - 'Totally Unproductive'

Source Nicholas Romano and Jay F. Nunamaker, Jr.

# Purpose of the “Action Agenda”

- ✦ Get Things Done



## Purpose of the “Action Agenda”

- ✦ Increase Productivity
- ✦ Increase Efficiency
- ✦ Decrease Costs
- ✦ Increase Use of the Talent Around the Table

## What an “Action Agenda” Does

- ✦ Focuses attention
- ✦ Encourages preparation
- ✦ Drives decision-making

## Six Components of Each Agenda Item

1. Name of Agenda Item
2. Purpose of the Item
3. Individuals Required
4. Time Allotted
5. Action Required
6. Preparation Required

# 1. Name of Agenda Item

- ✦ General Subject Matter
  
- ✦ Example
  - ✦ Suicide Prevention
  - ✦ Family Center Fiscal Needs
  - ✦ Implementation of Youth Survey



## Sample Agenda Item

- ✦ ITEM: Fundraising plan for afterschool program at Dexter Elementary

## 2. Purpose of the Item

- ✦ Why are we talking about this?
- ✦ How does it fit in with the mission and purpose of this team, committee or board?



# Sample Agenda Item

- ☀ ITEM: Fundraising plan for afterschool program at Dexter Elementary
  - PURPOSE: Secure financial future of the program which has been identified by the board to fill critical need

### 3. Individuals Required

- ✦ Who absolutely has to be around the table to make this a productive discussion?
  - ✦ Which specific people?
  - ✦ What specific organizations?
  - ✦ Which decision makers?

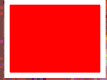


## Sample Agenda Item

- ★ ITEM: Fundraising plan for afterschool program at Dexter Elementary
  - PURPOSE: Secure financial future of the program which has been identified by the board to fill critical need
  - PEOPLE REQUIRED: Mark Taylor, Dexter Principal; Shelia Crawford, Superintendent; Lawan Johnson, Chair Fundraising Committee

## 4. Time Allotted

- ✦ How much time on the agenda is needed to attend to this business?
- ✦ Expect Unfinished Business



## Sample Agenda Item

- ☀ ITEM: Fundraising plan for afterschool program at Dexter Elementary
  - PURPOSE: Secure financial future of the program which has been identified by the board to fill critical need
  - PEOPLE REQUIRED: Mark Taylor, Dexter Principal; Shelia Crawford, Superintendent; Lawan Johnson, Chair Fundraising Committee
  - TIME: 20 minutes

## 5. Action Required

- ✦ What do we need to produce at the end of this item?
  - ✦ Reach a decision
  - ✦ Create a Work Group
  - ✦ Discussion only - 'No Action Required'

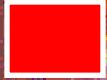


## Sample Agenda Item

- ☀ ITEM: Fundraising plan for afterschool program at Dexter Elementary
  - PURPOSE: Secure financial future of the program which has been identified by the board to fill critical need
  - PEOPLE REQUIRED: Mark Taylor, Dexter Principal; Shelia Crawford, Superintendent; Lawan Johnson, Chair Fundraising Committee
  - TIME: 20 minutes
  - ACTION: Approve/reject the plan as written

## 6. Preparation Required

- ★ What do participants need to do in order to contribute to this agenda item?
  - Reading
  - Review of previous discussion
  - Material to bring to meeting



## Sample Agenda Item

- ☀ **ITEM:** Fundraising plan for afterschool program at Dexter Elementary
  - **PURPOSE:** Secure financial future of the program which has been identified by the board to fill critical need
  - **PEOPLE REQUIRED:** Mark Taylor, Dexter Principal; Shelia Crawford, Superintendent; Lawan Johnson, Chair Fundraising Committee
  - **TIME:** 20 minutes
  - **ACTION:** Approve/reject the plan as written
  - **PREPARATION:** Read at minimum the 2 page executive summary

# Staffing an Effective Action Meeting

- ✦ Chairperson
- ✦ Timekeeper
- ✦ Scribe
- ✦ Prepared Participants

## Chairperson's Seven Tasks



1. Solicits and organizes agenda items
2. Ensures agenda and materials are sent to participants at least 3 business days in advance
3. Facilitates discussion so all agenda items are addressed

## Chairperson's Seven Tasks



4. Minimizes discussion not directly related to agenda
5. Provides “air time” for all participants
6. Ensures that action items are recorded
7. Delegates responsibilities for action items

# Traits of a Good Chairperson

- ✦ Establishes expectations
- ✦ Sets a clear agenda
- ✦ Keeps timeframes as short as possible
- ✦ Invites only those needed

## Traits of a Good Chairperson

- ✦ Is on time and demands punctuality in others
- ✦ Appoints a strong timekeeper and scribe
- ✦ Ensures complete minutes taken and distributed

## Timekeeper's Three Tasks



1. Starts and ends the meeting on time
2. Keeps the Chairperson to the allotted schedule
3. Interjects themselves when an agenda item is approaching its allotted time

# Traits of a Good Timekeeper

- ✦ Disciplined
- ✦ Self-assured
- ✦ Assertive
- ✦ Secure

# The Importance of Timeliness



- ✦ Effective people are rarely late to a meeting
- ✦ Effective people are effective because they manage time well
- ✦ You want your effective people to feel the meeting was worth their time

# The Importance Of Timeliness



- ☀ Meetings that start late waste the time of your most important people
- ☀ Late comers are less important
- ☀ Late starting meetings drive away your most important people

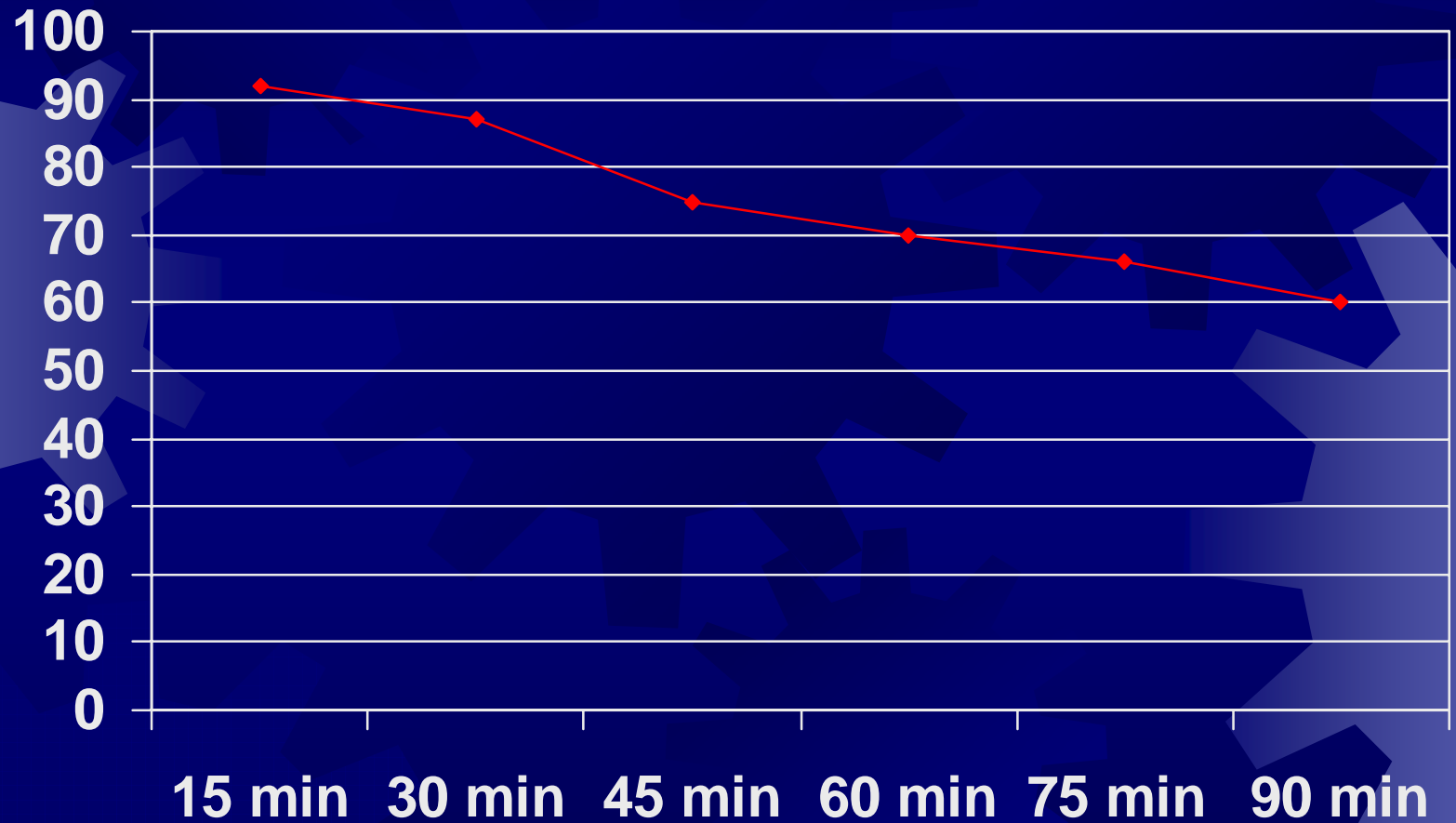
# The Importance of Timeliness

- Ending on time is a sign of respect to the people you have assembled
- They have other priorities in their work
- Attention and comprehension drop precipitously after the ending time



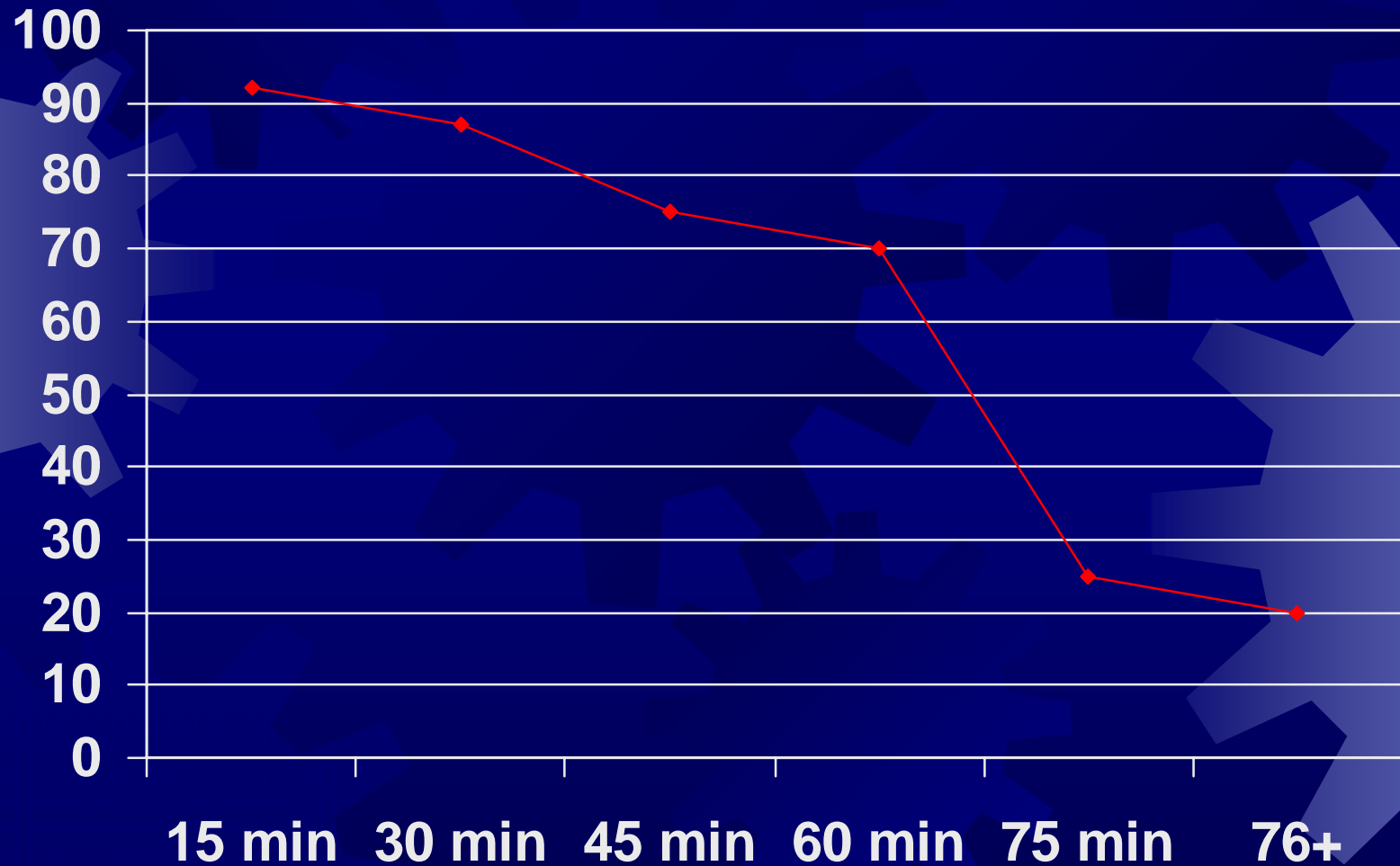
# Attention and Comprehension

## Scheduled 90 minute meeting



# Attention and Comprehension

Scheduled 60 minute meeting



## Scribe's Four Tasks



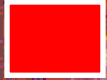
1. Records list of participants
2. Documents agenda items discussed/not discussed
3. Records tasks assigned to specific individuals
4. Notes issues raised for further investigation

## Participant's Four Principle Tasks

1. Review materials prior to the meeting
2. Be on time
3. Focus comments solely on the agenda items being discussed
4. Complete action items from the previous meeting on time

## Four Questions for Participants

- ☀ Do you know the purpose of this meeting?
- ☀ Do you have an agenda?
- ☀ Do you know what you need to do to prepare?
- ☀ Do you know your role?



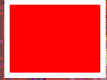
# Discussion



- ☀ What can an “Action Agenda” bring to our meetings?
- ☀ Can it hurt our meetings?
- ☀ Do we want to give it a try?

## Instituting the “Action Agenda”

- ✦ Explain the concept to your board, committee or team
- ✦ Ask for a 2-3 month trial
- ✦ Use Center for Schools and Communities’ staff to review your agenda and discuss implementation issues



# Pop Quiz !





## Which of these is NOT a required characteristic of a good Timekeeper?

- A. Articulate
- B. Assertive
- C. Disciplined
- D. Self-assured
- E. Secure



**Which of these is NOT a required characteristic of a good Timekeeper?**

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- C. Disciplined
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- E. Secure



## Business leaders indicate how much meeting time is somewhat or totally unproductive?

- A. Less than 10%
- B. 20-25%
- C. About 50%
- D. More than three quarters
- E. All of it



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**As we learned, a major negative impact of starting meetings late is...**

- A. Longer meetings
- B. Shorter meetings
- C. Driving away your most effective people
- D. Unfocused and unproductive discussion
- E. None of the above



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## One of the benefits of listing the Individuals Required for each agenda item is...

- A. Lets participants know if powerful people will be at the meeting
- B. Allows for better use of time by tabling items if required people not present
- C. Allows for easier seating arrangements so that required individuals are close to the Chairperson
- D. Encourages discussion from other participants
- E. None of the above



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## Which of these is NOT a required characteristic of a good Chairperson?

- A. Accountable
- B. Punctual
- C. Delegates
- D. Charisma
- E. Brevity



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**If you had 20 people in a 60 minute meeting, how many would still be attentive at the 60 minute mark?**

**A. 17**

**B. 14**

**C. 12**

**D. 8**

**E. 5**



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**How many would still be attentive if the meeting ran 15 minutes long?**

**A. 17**

**B. 14**

**C. 12**

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**How many would still be attentive if the meeting ran 15 minutes long?**

A. 17

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## The Participants responsibilities are to....

- A. Review materials prior to the meeting
- B. Be on time
- C. Keep comments on topic
- D. Complete action items from the previous meeting
- E. All of the above



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# Get More Things Done



- ☀ Your time is your most valuable asset
- ☀ Use it wisely
- ☀ Use it effectively
- ☀ Get more out of the meetings you organize

**Next Month**

# **Where Did the Money Go?**

**A Framework for Thinking about  
How We Spend Our Resources**

**January 7, 2008 – 9:00 am**