Tips and trick for running remote meetings

Running effective virtual meetings that deliver outcomes as well as a positive and useful experience for all participants can be done; provided we follow a few simple rules.

These are slightly different from meeting rules when everyone is in the same room, but if you don't want to miss out on contributions from your team members, they are essential. This is especially true when you have a group of people dialling in together from one room – it is difficult to feel part of the conversation if you are the only one hanging on the phone line… It is your role as the manager and chair of the meeting to ensure everybody still gets heard and feels part of the conversation.

Here are some tips and tricks to help you achieve this:

- Make sure everyone is introduced: do a 'round-robin' to say hello – it will help the team to recognise each other's voices during the call
- State ground rules clearly at the beginning of the meeting:
    - Only one person to speak at a time
    - Ask everyone to state their name clearly whenever they begin to speak as it is difficult to recognise all voices remotely
- When you ask questions from all the team, go to the phone first for responses
- If you do a 'round robin' alternate between phone and room if you can and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak – keep a track record of respondents if necessary
- If you haven't heard from the phone line in a while, especially when a heated discussion is taking place in the room, stop and ask for input from the phone - it can be hard to break into a conversation when you are on a telephone link and not in the room
- Use the technology to your advantage:
    - Ask participants to switch the camera option on within the conference call tool you are using – and do the same in the meeting room
    - Use the chat box to collect remote employees' answers, and if possible have someone help you capture and react to these as you run your meeting

Remember

When you can't see people, you can't accurately guess what they're thinking or feeling! About 55% of what we communicate is non-verbal ... from facial expressions to body movement!

With phone calls or even video links, you may have to make verbal what you can usually see ... How are you feeling today? Are you getting frustrated by this situation? What further support do you need?

Marshalls