

POPP: Planning Tool for Meetings

One of the one of the most important and expensive things we do in our organizations is meet. Every time we meet we are committing staff time and attention – our most valuable resources. One tool to help leverage our meetings is called POPP.

POPP is a simple tool that helps focus and clarify the essential elements of a meeting: the purpose, the desired outcome, the people involved, and the process that will be used.

POPP

- **Purpose** – What is the purpose of the meeting? Why do we need to meet?
- **Outcomes** – What will happen as a result of the meeting?
- **Process** – What is the process we will use to make the meeting most effective? (Could be a facilitated conversation, a brainstorm, a go-around, etc.)
- **People** – Who needs to attend the meeting? Who is facilitating? (Sometimes the person who calls the meeting chooses to have someone else facilitate.) Who is tracking action items to ensure they're completed?

It's recommended that all meetings provide a POPP in advance, via email, to all participants, and conclude with a list of time-bound action items.

The facilitator is empowered to run the meeting in the best manner to move it toward the requested outcome. That means they keep the conversation focused, redirecting it as needed, and pushing for the most effective process. This kind of active facilitation is focused on driving toward the desired outcomes, which means bringing people back if they get off topic. All members of a meeting should also be active participants, speaking up if they feel the conversation is straying from the agreed-upon process or losing sight of the outcome.

Some potential ways to implement a POPP

- Meeting lead sends out agenda & POPP 24-48 hours in advance of meeting
- Facilitator starts meeting with brief review of the POPP, seeking alignment, any suggestions/adjustments
- Community agreements/ground rules are created, (or reviewed if already in place)
- Every participant agrees to take responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of the meeting by actively engaging, however that looks for them
- Every meeting closes with brief feedback - "Did we achieve our purpose and desired outcome? What worked? What could have gone differently?"