

2 Formal meetings

In this unit:

- organizing a meeting
- chairing a meeting

2.3 The expert view

4 As you watch Andrew talk about chairing formal meetings, make notes about his comments by answering questions 1–8.

Content

- 1 Before the meeting, managing 'content' involves _____
- 2 During the meeting, managing 'content' involves _____
- 3 What techniques can you use to manage content?

Process

- 4 What does 'process' include?
- 5 During a meeting, how do you manage process?

Dynamic

- 6 'Dynamic' refers to 'the way people are _____ in the meeting'.
- 7 How should the chairperson manage the dynamic of a meeting?
- 8 What happens if someone concentrates too much on dynamic and not enough on content and process?

For a summary of Content, Process and Dynamic, read the article on pages 52–53.

2.4 Analysis

5 Watch the meeting again and analyse the performance of the chairperson, Marcus. Tick (✓) the points that Marcus does, and note down examples where appropriate.

	Did Marcus ...	Example
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • send people the agenda before the meeting? <input type="checkbox"/> • check everyone understood each point? <input type="checkbox"/> • summarize what was said? <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with any changes to the agenda? <input type="checkbox"/> • manage the timing effectively? <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage everyone to discuss issues openly? <input type="checkbox"/> • encourage everyone to contribute? <input type="checkbox"/> 	

2.5 The expert feedback

6 Watch Andrew's analysis of the chairperson. How do his comments compare to your analysis?

2.1 Talking points

1 Consider these questions.

- What types of formal meeting do you attend?
- What makes a successful chairperson in a meeting?

2 While you watch other people talking about the questions above, compare their experience with yours.

2.2 The meeting

3 The heads of department at the energy company QPG are having their regular departmental meeting. Read their agenda below.

Agenda points

- 1 Progress report on relocation and flexible working hours (Paul Griegson)
- 2 Issues relating to the next board meeting
- 3 Report on costs for relocation
- 4 Presentation of online survey results (Patricia Reyes)
- 5 AOB (= any other business)

While you watch the video, answer the questions below about the agenda points.

- 1 Item 4: What time will Miss Reyes' presentation start? How might this affect the agenda?
- 2 AOB: What does Marcus want to discuss during 'any other business'?
- 3 Item 1: Does Maja want to discuss Paul's proposal in item 1? Why / why not?
- 4 Item 2: What does Marcus ask Lydia to tell him?
- 5 Item 3: What does Matt say about item 3?
- 6 Item 3: What does Marcus say in his summary of item 3?
- 7 Item 4: What time will they start again after the break?

Language focus

2.2.5 Starting the meeting

1 Read Marcus's introduction to the meeting in the video. Complete his introduction with these words. There is one extra word which he doesn't use.

- apologies item break agenda
minutes any other business

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much for being here on time. We've got a lot to do today so let's get started. Now, everyone's here apart from John in Facilities. But we have ¹ _____ from him. Has everyone got a copy of the ² _____?

Good. OK, can I draw your attention to ³ _____ four where it says 'presentation of online survey results'? The presentation is going to be given by Miss Patricia Reyes who is a representative of the research company who we contracted to carry out the work. Now, Miss Reyes will arrive at eleven thirty so I plan to ⁴ _____ at about eleven fifteen so she has time to set up. It may also mean that we need to interrupt the first few agenda items but we'll come back to those. And lastly, I'd like to leave a little bit of time under ⁵ _____ to discuss whatever might come out of the presentation.

2 Watch the first part of the meeting again and check your answers in 1.

3 Underline and write down any useful expressions in the introduction in 1 that you can use to:

- a welcome everyone
- b say who can't attend
- c refer to items on the agenda
- d talk about any changes to the agenda

Moving through the items on an agenda

4 Marcus often uses expressions to clearly end and start different points on the agenda. For example, notice how he ends item two and moves to item three:

'And that's everything I think on item two. Right. Moving on to item three and the cost breakdown for the relocation.'

Categorize these expressions in the table.

So, item one is ... Paul, can you take us through this next point?
Moving on to item two. I think that's enough on item one. Let's go on to the next item.
... is the next item on the agenda. We're running out of time so let's leave it there.

Introducing an item	Ending the item	Moving from one item to the next
So, item one is ...		



5 Read a chairperson's sentences from a meeting. Complete them with words and phrases from 4.

- 1 Staff overtime is the next _____ point as it's your area?
- 2 Rosaria, can you take us _____ so we'd better stop there.
- 3 Thank you Rosaria. I'm afraid we're _____ on this item. We can return to it at the next meeting.
- 4 I think _____ on this item. We can return to it at the next meeting.
- 5 That's everything on item two so let's _____ item three ...

Encouraging discussion and summarizing

6 In the video, Marcus often encourages discussion and summarizes the main points after each item. For example:

'Matt, you look as if you might have a question ... I just want to summarize where we are so far.'

Look at more sentences for encouraging and summarizing. Replace the words that are underlined with one of the phrasal verbs below.

- go over talk us through sum up open this up for discussion bring it up
- 1 I'd like to sum up our discussion so far.
 - 2 OK. So let's examine what we've all agreed.
 - 3 Would you like to explain to us your concerns about this point?
 - 4 If anyone has an objection, you should raise it now.
 - 5 I'd like to discuss this as a group.

7 Look at the sentences below that encourage discussion or summarize content.

Match sentences 1–6 to the sentence a–f that has a similar meaning.

- 1 Is there anything anyone would like to add? a Can I just run through what we've agreed?
- 2 I just want to summarize what we discussed. b Does anyone have any further comments?
- 3 What do other people think about that? c Carl, you look as though you might have a question.
- 4 Maria, do you have anything you'd like to say? d What does everyone else think about that?
- 5 Can I quickly go over what we've agreed? e Are there any other opinions about this?
- 6 Does anyone have any other views on this? f I'd like to recap on what we discussed.

8 Which of the sentences in 6 and 7 are used to do the following?

- a encourage comments from all the group _____
- b encourage an individual to speak _____
- c summarize what was agreed _____

Meetings task: chairing a meeting

Work in small groups of three to five people. You are the management team of a medium-sized manufacturer of bicycles. Your biggest market is Europe but you have a rapidly growing customer base in Asia. You have just developed a new type of folding bicycle for commuters, made from a strong but lightweight material. You believe the product will be very popular.



Alternative task

Work in small groups. You are meeting to discuss the plan to redecorate your office. Make a list of what you will need to discuss at the meeting. For example, the colour of the walls, the new furniture, the layout of the office, etc. When you have a list of four or five items, start the meeting. One person is the chairperson. The rest of the participants must argue for their preferences for each item on the agenda. The chairperson must try to control the meeting and reach a final agreement!

You are going to hold three short meetings lasting a maximum of five minutes each. Use the agendas below. Choose a different person to be the chairperson at each of the three meetings.

MEETING 1

Aim of meeting: To plan a marketing campaign for the folding bicycle in Asia

Apologies for absence: Rachel Smart – Marketing Assistant

Agenda items:

- 1 Determine key markets: China and / or other countries in Asia?
- 2 Decide on marketing campaign. What type of advertising? (e.g. TV commercials, Internet ads, etc.)

3 AOB*

MEETING 2

Aim of meeting: To choose new range of cycling accessories and target markets

Apologies for absence: Nergiz Gomm – Production Assistant

Agenda items:

- 1 Select accessory or accessories. Proposed accessories: helmets, locks, lights, jackets, mirrors, bells.
- 2 Target markets for each accessory (children, youth sector, middle-aged sector, male, female, etc.).

3 AOB

MEETING 3

Aim of meeting: To discuss proposal for new factory

Apologies for absence: Franco Sagarra – Production Coordinator

Agenda items:

- 1 Proposals for new factory: (1) build a new factory in the same country; (2) build a new factory in new country or continent.
- 2 Options for employment at new factory: (1) relocate existing employees; (2) recruit new employees locally.

3 AOB

Useful phrases

Starting the meeting

Good morning.
Thank you for coming / for being here on time.

Let's get started.

(Jim) has sent his apologies for being absent.

The aim / purpose of this meeting is to ...

Referring to the agenda and timing

Has everyone got a copy of the agenda?

Can I draw your attention to item one of the agenda?

There is one change to the agenda.

I plan to end at / take a break at ...

I'd like to spend a little time on ...

Moving through the agenda

So, item one is ...

Let's go on to the next item.

Moving on to item three.

Can you fill us in on this next point?

We're running out of time, so let's move on.

I think that's enough on item one.

Encouraging comments

Would anyone like to / Does anyone want to comment on this?

What does everyone think about that?

Any thoughts about that?

You look as if you have a question.

Are there any further questions / issues?

Summarizing and ending

Let's stop there, shall we?

I'd just like to summarize what we have discussed.

To sum up what we've agreed so far.

Is there any other business?

Our next meeting is on ...

Task assessment

Use the form below to analyse the performance of the chairperson at the meeting. When you are the chairperson, use this form to assess your own performance. Make notes about how well the chairperson managed each point and what could be improved.

Did the chairperson ... (✓/X)

- welcome everyone?
- outline the agenda and give apologies for absence?
- move through the agenda logically and control the timing?
- check that everyone understood each point?
- summarize what was said?
- encourage everyone to contribute?
- ask for any other business?

Notes

*AOB = any other business