

---

# Five Ways to Not Ruin Your Next Staff Meeting

---

When you have a staff meeting coming up, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

- Are you dreading it because you know you're only going to hear about what went wrong on Sunday?
- Are you wondering if you'll have time to discuss any new ideas or fresh vision?

How does your staff view these meetings?

- Are they prepared and ready with solutions to challenging issues?
- Do they feel like this is some version of "judgment day" and they're going to hear from you about everything they're doing wrong?
- Have meetings become dry and tend to be taken over by the loudest person with the most passion about a topic?

If any of this sounds familiar, you're not alone. According to the [Microsoft Office Personal Productivity Challenge](#), a survey of 38,000 participants in 200 countries, workers spend 5.6 hours a week in meetings; 69 percent feel meetings aren't productive.

You've got big vision with plenty to accomplish, so wasting time in a meeting that doesn't produce results isn't going to work.

*Here are five tips on what not to do plus how to turn things around:*

**#1 – Don't follow a system.**

Winging it during a staff meeting is a sure-fire way to spend a lot of time accomplishing very little. You'll end up trying to fix an urgent, but not important, issue instead of developing the long-term vision or planning ahead for next month's events.

Winging it during a #church staff meeting is a sure-fire way to spend a lot of time accomplishing very little.

[bctt tweet="Winging it during a #church staff meeting is a sure-fire way to spend a lot of time accomplishing very little. " username="churchfuel"]

The three-part system we recommend includes stories, updates, and issues.

**Stories**

Depending on the size of your team and the time allotted, go around the table and ask for one story from each person or pick a different 2-3 people each week.

The idea here is to share stories that encourage, inspire, and refresh the team.

Stories such as:

- A couple that asked to renew their marriage vows after a tough year.
- A teenage son coming up with his dad to receive Christ.
- A new family who're visiting for the first time and commented on how welcomed and "at home" they felt.

Your team can become discouraged when people keep complaining about the temperature in the sanctuary, worship music style, and more. Sharing stories of changed lives pours gasoline on the fire they have for ministry.

## *Updates*

It's easy to become so focused on what's coming up for your ministry area that you don't know what the rest of the team is planning. If that's how your staff operates, you'll end up with issues such as having too many announcements on Sunday or asking the same volunteers to work several events (at the same time).

Ask each department leader to provide a 2-3 minute update. This should include metrics (number of volunteers added, event registrations, and more), how the last week went, and what they have coming up within the next few weeks.

This is a great time for other leaders to consider how an event or program in another area may impact them.

- Does the media department need to block off time to prepare new graphics and web pages for a youth trip?
- Will the facilities team need to have volunteers ready to clean up after a Saturday night event?

## *Issues*

Once each leader has provided an update, open the floor to discuss issues. Enforce the “don't bring up an issue without offering at least one potential solution” rule. Issues raised during a staff meeting should be those that require higher level approval to solve, impact more than one department, or where the department leader needs the team's help in choosing a potential solution.

If it looks like a particular issue is complex and will require more time, table it and schedule a separate meeting with a smaller group.

## ***#2 – Don't invite the wrong people.***

Have you ever been in a meeting and someone said, “I really wish John was here. He’s leading this effort and has the most up-to-date information.”? Or maybe you need to focus on the family ministries and therefore the worship pastor or others don’t really need to attend.

Use the agenda to determine who needs to be at the meeting. Also, you may decide to not cover a topic in a staff meeting if it only impacts a few leaders.

## ***#3 – Let people come unprepared.***

Providing an agenda at least one business day prior to the meeting sets the tone. You’re communicating to the team an expectation to be prepared. If I’m listed on the agenda to provide an update on the upcoming women’s event, I’d better be ready to offer an executive summary plus be able to answer any questions.

## ***#4 – Only talk about urgent issues.***

If your team is constantly in fire drill mode, you’ll never get to strategic discussions. When there’s an urgent issue to address, consider scheduling a separate meeting with only those who must be involved.

If your team is constantly in fire drill mode, you’ll never get to strategic discussions.

Instead, make time for topics that will help you propel your church forward such as:

- **Reviewing metrics** to do a health check on various departments or the church as a whole (financial reports, attendance, volunteer numbers, and community impact, are a few examples)
- **Setting goals** that support the vision of the church and challenge your team.

- **Discussing your efforts to make disciples** and equip your congregation for ministry. What's working? What isn't working? How can you tell?

**#5 – Don't create an environment for dishonest discussion.**

*"Leaders who don't listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say."*

– [Andy Stanley](#)

If you're the senior pastor, your words weigh more than anyone else's. If there's a sticky situation to discuss or a controversial decision to make, raise the topic and sit back. Get your team to weigh in and offer their insights. Encourage respectful and honest debate.

Make sure your team knows it's okay to disagree behind closed doors. Once a decision is made, you'll need their full support, but during this meeting, you want their opinion (dissenting or otherwise).

You've hired these team members for their talents, abilities, and experience. You need critical thinkers who'll offer their ideas, constructive criticism, and encouragement.

**Bonus tip: Wrap-up each meeting with action items**

"Don't conclude the meetings until there is clarity on what action items need to take place during the week, who is responsible for them; and the timetable to get them done."

– [Thom Rainer](#)

Church staff meetings can be productive, encouraging, and collaborative. It requires planning and effort to lead your team to that type of meeting. The ministry results will be well worth it.

*What one change will you implement for your next church staff meeting?*

*Deborah Ike is a writer and project manager who's passionate about providing resources for those working behind the scenes in ministry. She's also a newlywed, married on 12/13/14. And no, they didn't choose that date on purpose, but it sure is easy to remember. She and her husband, David, have a German Shepherd who is larger than most children. Learn more at [www.velocityministrymanagement.com](http://www.velocityministrymanagement.com).*

### ***Leading the Church***

You're supposed to lead your staff and develop leaders in your church, but where do you start?

To make it simple we created a FREE resourced called the Senior Pastor's Guide to Leading a Staff. This simple guide will help you with practical ideas and resources on leading a staff intentionally and consistently.

Get your FREE copy of the Senior Pastor's Guide to Leading a Staff today.

[Download the guide](#)