



Article

Helping the mentee improve their contribution in meetings

© David Clutterbuck, 2015

Prof David Clutterbuck
Coaching and Mentoring International Ltd
Woodlands, Tollgate,
Maidenhead,
Berks, UK. SL6 4LJ

www.coachingandmentoringinternational.org
e-mail: info@coachingandmentoringinternational.org
Company registration number : 08158710

Helping the mentee improve their contribution in meetings

Whether you are presenting at a meeting or simply attending as a participant, being effective requires the development of core skills. For giving presentations, there is a wealth of advice and training that covers issues such as using Powerpoint slides, engaging with the audience and so on. Sometimes, it can be helpful to be observed giving a presentation and gather feedback from a coach or mentor – or from anyone in the room. But participating in meetings is not a frequently taught skill.

Coaches and mentors can help here by reviewing with the learner how they prepare for and perform as meeting participants. A practical approach is to ask the learner to make notes for several meetings about:

- How they prepared for the meeting
- How they engaged with the meeting as it started
- How they made (or didn't make) contributions
- How they reviewed their learning from the meeting.

It's important to distinguish between attending a meeting (where you don't have to add any value) and participating (where it's expected that you do). In reviewing each of the stages above, the following questions can be helpful:

Preparation

- What two key things do you want to say at this meeting?
- How will you say them most effectively?
- What do you know (should you know) about the positions other people at the meeting are likely to take on issues important to you?

Engaging with the meeting as it starts

- How will you manage your feelings as you enter the room?
- What kind of impression do you want to make at this point and how will you do so?
- How will you make the meeting chair and/or other people aware of what agenda items you particularly want to contribute on?

What will you do to ensure you contribute at the right time?

- How will you identify the cues for you to speak up?
- What body posture and frame of mind will give you the confidence you need to make your points at the right time?
- How will you show that you have listened and analysed what has been said by other people?
- How can you challenge in a way that feels authentic to you and will be accepted by others in the room?

Reviewing your learning

- How will you gather feedback from others, if appropriate?
- How could you have contributed more?