

A modern conference room with a long, dark wood conference table surrounded by light-colored, high-back office chairs. In the background, there is a large window with a view of a city and mountains, and a grey sofa. A large, bold title is overlaid on the image, enclosed in a light green rectangular border.

# HOW TO HAVE **ACTION-ORIENTED MEETINGS**

**THE UNSTUCK GROUP<sup>®</sup>**

— WE HELP CHURCHES GET UNSTUCK. —

How much time do you spend each month in team meetings? Seriously, add it up really quick. Now think about this question for a moment: *How much have you gotten out of those meetings this month?* Is your ministry more effective because of the time you spent around the table?

In our work with hundreds of churches across the county, we frequently encounter teams that struggle to have effective meetings. Whether they realize it or not, they waste countless hours discussing the same problems, fighting over the same issues, and endlessly refining their plans without actually putting them into action. Every now and then, they might change up their meeting schedule hoping a new pace will do the trick. But if a team is struggling to be effective, changing when they meet is not going to make a difference.

Ever wonder if your leadership team meetings are under-delivering? Here are a few signs that indicate they are:

- You continue talking about the same issues meeting after meeting.
- People avoid conflict at every cost.
- Conflict is frequent but rarely results in greater understanding and unity.
- Individuals spend more time talking about the specific ministries they lead rather than the church at large.
- Conversation gets hung up in the details of execution rather than the direction of strategy.
- When the meeting ends, action items are unclear and unassigned.
- You start every meeting at exactly the same place you ended the previous one. Nothing has changed and no progress has been made between meetings.

If any of these sound familiar, this Team Mee'ng Scorecard below can help you make the most of your time and team. It is meant to help you evaluate your meetings to ensure you have productive conversation and truly make progress. Whether you are a lead pastor responsible for senior leadership team meetings or a staff member leading a meeting with volunteers, this scorecard will keep you focused and aligned.

**Are you ready to start having action-oriented meetings?**

TEAM MEETING SCORECARD			
Productive Conversation	Unhealthy Conflict _____ Healthy Conflict		
	Execution _____ Strategy		
	Silos _____ Shared Vision		
Progress Between Meetings	Agenda Items	Action Items for Us	Decisions for Others
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		

## Breaking the Meeting Score Card Down

### HAVING PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATION

#### Healthy vs. Unhealthy Conflict

Healthy conflict leads to greater understanding and unity. Team members feel safe enough to disagree and care enough to work through differing perspectives. Wisdom is found in the counsel of many (Prov. 15:22). On the other hand, unhealthy conflict only deepens misunderstanding and disunity. People take sides and try to drag others onto their turf. The loudest voice, not the wisest voice, wins.

At the end of each meeting, ask:

- | *Were differing opinions fully expressed?*
- | *Are we leaving more unified because of our conflict?*

#### Strategy vs. Execution

Particularly for senior leadership teams, it is important to stay focused on strategy and the big picture direction of your church. It is easy to drift toward execution, the small-picture details of the projects. But those are better passed on to those closer to the task at hand. Your team should spend the bulk of its time on issues that affect the entire organization rather than items that can be handled by the responsible departments.

At the end of each meeting, ask:

- | *Did we invest our time in the direction of our church?*
- | *Or spend our time in details that others could handle?*

## Silos vs. Shared Vision

Meetings often open with everyone around the table giving an update from their area. That is helpful if those updates are relevant to the church at large. But often, they steal time from conversation about the vision. As Patrick Lencioni shares in *The Advantage*, leaders should prioritize the team they're on over the team they lead. In other words, the conversations in your meeting should focus more on where you're going together (vision) than what you're individually leading on your own (silos).

At the end of each meeting, ask:

| *Is everyone prioritizing the future of our church over the functions of their departments?*

## MAKING PROGRESS BETWEEN MEETINGS

### Action Items On the Team

At the conclusion of each meeting, review all agenda items and clarify the action steps needed for each one. Be sure each step includes a deadline and an owner who is in the room - even if that owner is going to empower someone else to accomplish the task. Avoid the temptation to simply table items until the next meeting. If you're not ready to make a decision, assign someone the responsibility of gathering the additional information you'll need to move forward.

At the end of each meeting, ask:

| *What needs to be done? By who? And by when?*

### Decision-Making Outside the Team

No leadership team is capable of making every decision for the organization. You simply lack the time required as well as the perspective of those on the ground. Great leaders empower others as much as possible to make the decisions that they are responsible for implementing. Don't just identify the action steps your team will take. Also identify the decisions you need to push outside of the room. Doing so will help you establish a healthy culture and develop other leaders.

At the end of each meeting, ask:

| *What decisions should be passed on to others?*

## *Could Your Church Use Help Building an Effective Staff Structure?*

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A Staffing & Structure Review helps a church position its team to best fit both the ministry and the individuals involved. From org. charts to job descriptions to governance and leadership development, this process will help your church staff achieve its vision.

[Read more about The Unstuck Group's Staffing & Structure Review process.](#)