

## Making an Effective Use of Meetings



Making effective use of meetings, drives productivity, fosters collaboration, and can help achieve business goals. However, we also recognise that meetings can often be seen as time-consuming and unproductive. Here are some tips on how to make your meetings more effective and efficient.

1. **Have a Clear Purpose:** Before scheduling a meeting, ask yourself: What is the purpose of this meeting? Is it to brainstorm ideas, make decisions, or provide updates? Having a clear purpose will help you set an agenda and keep the meeting focused.
2. **Set an Agenda:** A well-defined agenda is essential for a productive meeting. It helps participants know what to expect and prepares them to contribute effectively. Be sure to share the agenda with all participants in advance, so they can come prepared.
3. **Keep it Short and Sweet:** Long meetings can be draining and unproductive. Aim to keep your meetings short and focused. If you find that you need more time to discuss certain topics, consider scheduling a follow-up meeting.
4. **Encourage Participation:** Meetings are most effective when everyone participates. Encourage your team members to share their ideas, ask questions, and provide feedback. This not only fosters collaboration but also ensures that everyone feels heard and valued.
5. **Assign Action Items:** At the end of the meeting, make sure to assign action items and deadlines. This holds everyone accountable and ensures that progress is made between meetings.
6. **Use Technology Wisely:** In today's digital age, there are many tools available to make meetings more efficient. Whether it's video conferencing software or project management tools, find the right technology that works for your team.
7. **Review and Reflect:** After the meeting, take some time to review what worked well and what could be improved. This will help you continuously refine your meeting process and make them more effective in the future.

In conclusion, meetings can be a powerful tool for small business owners to drive productivity and achieve business goals. By following these tips, you can make your meetings more effective and efficient, ultimately leading to greater success for your business.

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## Why Use Strength Based Psychometrics?

Talent and strengths-assessment are increasingly recognised to be powerful tools for future prediction of talent, values and career potential. They can impact every stage of the talent lifecycle, from hiring and onboarding to improving employee performance and career development. At Agile HR we offer both traditional Personality Psychometrics but also newly focused Strengths Assessment.

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**Personality psychometrics and strength assessments** measure underlying or innate qualities that energise people and enable them perform at their best. It is important to note that talents aren't equivalent to strengths as they require upskilling and experience to maximise their power and enable others to recognise them as strengths. Strength implies a high level of competence, and competence requires skill, practice, perseverance, and the right conditions to develop. Strength can be seen as an "optimised talent."

### How does this differ from personality tests?

Personality tests measure people's personality types or traits and how these are likely to manifest as typical or normal patterns of behaviour in different aspects of their lives. They do not specifically highlight future/ scope for talent.

### What are the advantages of talent and strength-based assessments?

Talent based assessment focuses on understanding what's unique and different about people's talents, strengths, and behaviours. They capture not just people's innate talents, but also the type of work that enables them to perform at their best. These assessments also recognise that even when people have similar talents and strengths, they will apply them in different ways, depending on their aspirations, background, and the way they interpret and respond to different situations.

### Potential

All employers are looking for growth scope and future potential. Potential is the capacity to grow the capabilities required to be successful in a bigger role, or one involving greater responsibility. Potential involves being highly motivated to work hard to build relevant skills and achieve one's dreams and aspirations. Therefore, it is important for employers to help people discover their combined talents, career motivations and values, as greater awareness of all these will empower them to find career pathways that are engaging and meaningful for them, and where they can thrive and do their best work.



## Creating an Inclusive Workplace

There has been much coverage of Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DE&I) within the workplace. At Agile HR we are passionate about supporting and promoting all three and today we shall focus on Inclusion.

**Inclusion** can be defined as the extent to which every employee in the workplace, regardless of their identity, background or circumstances, feels accepted, valued, supported and therefore empowered to succeed by bringing their own unique perspectives and talents to the workplace. It is essentially how an employee feels they belong and how they experience the workplace.

The CIPD states 'inclusion is what's needed to give diversity real impact... True inclusion arises where individuals feel they will be valued for their own unique views and skills, not when 'different' people are accepted into an organisation as long as they comply with existing organisation norms.'

Fostering a successfully inclusive environment is linked with team innovation, creativity and knowledge-sharing and individually can be a powerful motivator, enhancing performance and also a tool for retention. Interestingly analysis has shown it ranked above having specific diversity policies and practices in place.

As a first step a business should ascertain whether its employees feel their workplace is inclusive and what suggestions they have for improvement to support a more inclusive environment. Employees can provide valuable insight into whether your people management and HR practices are inclusive. Include employees in the process of guiding the company towards a more inclusive workspace as this is the first step towards inclusivity!

### Start at the top!

Ensure those at board level not only reflect diversity but also inclusivity and they must demonstrate a genuine commitment to inclusivity through actions and words. This could include making it a priority agenda item/ allocating resources for inclusivity measures/ holding themselves and others in the business to account for nurturing inclusivity.

Ensure line manager buy in, understanding and action. Managers must ensure all their employees feel valued, included and have an opportunity to contribute to team sessions and projects. Managers must be able to understand the strengths and also the specific needs of their individual team members. Agile recommends Psychometrics to support with this piece. Managers must be role models for inclusive behaviour and challenge any behaviour within the team that opposes or erodes this.

### Cultural add rather than Cultural fit

I love the concept of *cultural add* rather than *cultural fit*. This is where a new hire, rather than just fitting in with the existing team, will add something more to your business and culture. To achieve this, organisations

must promote diversity in hiring/ promotions and embrace candidates with unique talents and skills, with differing perspectives. When hiring, a business must ensure job descriptions eliminate bias and recruitment reaches candidates from a wide variety of cultures/ experiences and backgrounds. We must ensure the interview process is fair and impartial.

### Policies

Review your policies to ensure they are fair, inclusive and equitable.

### Training

Offer development opportunities to employees at any level who feel they could benefit from inclusivity/ diversity training. This will support their understanding of bias, inclusive communication and develop their self-awareness, thus enabling them to support the team in a more mindful and inclusive way.

### Celebrating diversity

As a business you can embrace your diverse workforce and support celebrations of many religions, holidays and other cultural events in a manner employees are comfortable with. It is essential to ask all employees what they would prefer before embarking on a programme of events.

### Office layout/ workspace

The key before actioning any new initiatives is to ask what support employees need rather than assume in advance. Ideas such as the below may be welcomed by employees but to be listened to in advance is a far more valuable approach.

- Rooms (meeting/break) thoughtfully designed to accommodate disability, accessible facilities for the less able bodies employees.
- If you are lucky enough to have a café on site, ensure the food variety and options cater for a variety of dietary requirements
- Ensure the individual workspaces/ tools empower your employees to achieve the best they can eg adjustable seating or desks/ specific tools and systems eg text to speech readers for those with dyslexia

### Feedback/ Evaluation

As always it is important to gain your employees' feedback either through focus groups/ surveys to ensure your people management, policies, practices and inclusive initiatives therein are effective and making a difference in your employee satisfaction, wellbeing, retention and recruitment.

*For further information or guidance on the above, please contact [hils@agilehrconsulting.com](mailto:hils@agilehrconsulting.com)*