1

Meet your team

1.1 *Effective meetings*

I suggest that teams permanently schedule two 2-hour blocks of time
per week for project work in this course to assist the team coordina-
tor in scheduling team meetings and agendas.

To have a productive team meeting:

1 Don't have a meeting without good reasons. These reasons
   become the *agenda*.
2 Stay on topic and keep to the schedule.
3 Record the meeting outcomes—the *meeting minutes*—and
   initiate follow-up actions—the *action items*.

1.2 *Team roles*

The team–role categories we use in this course are based on the type
of *service to the team* each role provides—the coordinator, recorder,
timekeeper, and monitor. The purpose of assuming these roles is to
help you have project meetings that are effective and efficient.

Yours is a team of peers. The coordinator is not the team "boss"
and the other team members are not his or her subordinates. Thus,
the coordinator is not supposed to tell everyone what to do and
team members are not supposed to wait to be told what to do. Each
member has specific responsibilities based on the assigned roles.

Coordinator

The coordinator (or chairperson) thinks through the reasons to have
a team meeting and develops the agenda with estimated timing for
each item. Action items from the previous meeting's minutes are a
natural starting for this process.

The coordinator "coordinates" with the team members for a mutu-
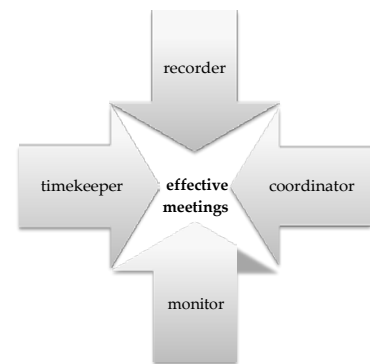ally acceptable time, place, and duration for the meeting.

Figure 1.1: The purpose of assigning
roles is to help create an environment
for effective and efficient meetings.

A sample agenda is shown in the
section on meeting forms.

The coordinator distributes the draft agenda for the coming meeting at least 1 day before the meeting.

The coordinator facilitates the completion of the meeting tasks and keeps everyone on task while maintaining high interpersonal morale among all team members.

The coordinator ensures that by the end of the meeting all action items have been assigned to a team member and that every action item has an agreed-to deadline. Conversely, the team coordinator ensures that every team member is volunteering for an equal share of the current set of action items.

When unforeseen complications arise as team members work on their assigned action items, the coordinator works with the team member to formulate a plan to deal with the problem.

Recorder

The recorder is responsible for recording the meeting minutes as the meeting progresses. Well-written meeting minutes:

A sample meeting minutes form is shown in the section on meeting forms.

1 Are action-oriented documents, not transcripts
2 Are brief documents emphasizing decisions, action items, responsibilities, and deadlines
3 Are organized around future tasks to be accomplished, especially the list of "action items" that can be used as a team checklist of tasks to be complete
4 Record the major decisions of the team to document the process of project development
5 Make use of document design features such as headings and bulleted lists

Recorders distribute the minutes to the team members no more than two days after the meeting by email.

Timekeeper

A specified amount of time is allotted for each item on the agenda. The timekeeper watches the clock and tells the team when the time limit is approaching (like a 2-minute warning) and when the time limit has been reached.

When the time limit has been reached, the time keeper reminds everyone that a decision should be recorded, an action item should be assigned, the team should agree to how much more time can be spent on this topic, or the topic is tabled and recorded in a collection of unresolved issues — the *issue bin*.

Monitor

The team monitor observes the *behavior* of team members to ensure that tasks are being performed correctly and efficiently. The monitor assesses whether or not a team member might require assistance. Assistance can include assisting the team member or volunteering to obtain external resources.

A monitor might say, for example, "That looks like two-person job. Let's work on it together before the next team meeting."

All team members are expected to…

1 Cooperate with the coordinator in scheduling meetings
2 Contact the coordinator with items to include in an agenda
3 Read the agendas when received
4 Help the coordinator keep everyone on task during a meeting
5 Cooperate with the timekeeper and help decide the status of the current topic when time runs out
6 Volunteer to be responsible for action items
7 Assist the coordinator in setting mutually agreeable and realistic deadlines for every action item
8 Read the minutes when received and reply with any corrections
9 Complete their assigned action items by the agreed deadlines
10 Contact the coordinator if unforeseen complications arise affecting a deadline and together develop an approach to address the problem

1.3   Meeting forms

Agenda

A sample agenda is shown in Figure 1.2. When a meeting is called, the coordinator lets the rest of the team know why a meeting has been called and about how long the meeting might last. These reasons form the draft agenda. The first task in a team meeting is to review the draft agenda and modify items and time estimates as needed. When everyone agrees on the agenda it guides the rest of the meeting.

At the meeting, everyone should have a copy of the agenda either electronically, on paper, or prominently displayed on a whiteboard/chalkboard where everyone can see it. The timekeeper uses it to keep track of time on each task.

Minutes

A sample meeting minutes[1] for meeting minutes is shown in Figure 1.3. The team recorder develops the minutes during the meeting and gives team members a chance to review and comment as the meeting develops.

[1] Tricia Gloss. Word team meeting minutes template. `http://www.brighthub.com/office/project-management/media/p/90519.aspx`, 2010

Agenda

Campus Walkway Lighting Project
Coordinator: Aydan Dušek
March 5, 2011

Date & time: Thursday, March 10, 2011, 6:00 pm
Location: Library study room
Expected duration: 2 hours

Item No.	Duration	Topic or task
1	5 min	Briefly review the presentation tips PowerPoint.
2	10 min	Reports from Margarethe (light annoyances in Percopo) and Tyr (new information from Facilities).
3	45 min	Organize facts into the four categories (social, environmental, financial, and technical) using whiteboard and start to arrange in a logical order for the presentation.
4	30-40 min	Create a rough draft of the PowerPoint presentation. Decide who will speak about which part during the talk.
5	10 min	Assign remaining tasks and decide if another meeting is necessary before Monday.

Figure 1.2: A sample agenda.

Meeting Minutes

Campus Walkway Lighting Project
Recorder: Tyr Hambleton

Date & time: 3/30/11, 8:30 pm
Location: Library
Attendees: Aydan Dušek, Tyr Hambleton, Caroline Tennfjord
Absent: Margarethe Marusic (soccer away trip)

Summary of points discussed, decisions made, and outstanding concerns/questions

Number	Topic	Highlights
1	Concept generation	Finished concept combination exercise Added more "means" to our list of subtopics generated in class
2	Criteria definition	Finished defining existing criteria Need to determine exactly how *much* light pollution needs to be reduced
3	Narrowing down ideas	Each member chose five concepts they thought were plausible Top choices were compiled into a list

Current action items

Number	Owner	Target Date	Item
1	Aydan	4/1/11	Email Dr. Ditteon to find out desired level of light pollution reduction
2	Caroline	4/4/11	Help with design of poster layout
3	Tyr	4/4/11	Drawing of light saber design

Newly closed action items

Number	Owner	Closed Date	Item & resolution
1	Aydan & Margarethe	3/30/11	Over 100 creative ideas were generated between two meetings and in class List was compiled and sent to each group member
2	Tyr & Caroline	3/30/11	Long list was narrowed down to eight possibly plausible ideas (still need to be defined and developed)

Expected next meeting

Date & time: 4/4/11, 6 pm
Location: Library
Purpose: To finish poster and begin preparing talk

Figure 1.3: A sample meeting minutes.

Meeting record-keeping

Agendas and minutes should be hand-written in your team's design notebook. I will review them at least once every two weeks. If significant class time is provided for you to work on your design project, it should count as a meeting and have a corresponding agenda and minutes.

If you meet more than once in a week, you will have more than one agenda and minutes for that week. Please do not combine agendas and minutes from different meetings. Please review my comments on your agendas & minutes and act on the suggested improvements.

1.4 Role rotation

I will reassign team roles approximately every 2 weeks. By the end of the term everyone will have served in every role. The rotation order is shown in Figure 1.4. The timekeeper becomes the coordinator, the coordinator becomes the recorder, etc.
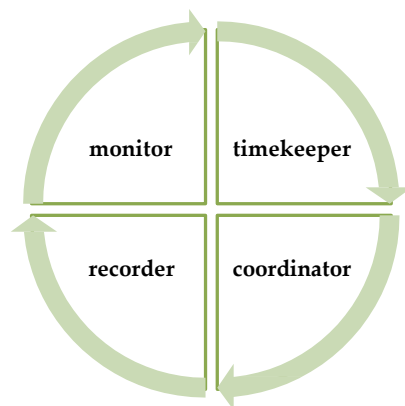

Figure 1.4: Everyone serves in every role.