



Dear Wendy,

Hope this finds you planning some vacation time over the summer. It is so important to find ways to renew our energy. Live life as a series of sprints, so that you have opportunity to rest. If you live life as a marathon, it will deplete your energy, making it harder to get to the other side. This is true in business and in your personal life.

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### The Five P's for Effective Business Communication - Preparation

Last month we talked about purpose, which is the first "P" of The Five P's of effective business communication. We learned about defining the desired outcome and sharing that to get everyone on the same page.

The second "P" is **preparation**:

- Get as much information about your audience or customer as you can-do the research to know who you're dealing with.
- Know your material cold. If you're not sure what you're going to say, not sure of the facts about your subject, you won't be able to answer questions from the audience. You will be unprepared and it will show.

Whether giving a presentation, welcoming attendees at a client event, or leading a meeting, preparation is critical to your success. The more you prepare, the better you can successfully improvise. A one-hour presentation that needs to be shortened to 20 minutes at the last minute will not throw you if you're familiar with the material. Time spent at the beginning is a worthwhile investment.

### Book Review



#### Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni's *Death by Meeting* is a must-read for anyone who has sat through boring and ineffective meetings. Meetings are a fact of life in any business. But too often, they drain rather than promote energy and enthusiasm. Told as a fictional story, *Death by Meeting* describes how meetings can be transformed from "painful and tedious into something productive, compelling, and even energizing." The benefit to companies that master the structure and process of meetings, suggests Lencioni, is that they will be able to differentiate themselves from their competitors "who continue to waste time, energy, and enthusiasm lamenting the drudgery of meetings."

Lencioni encourages both participants and leaders to be miners of conflict. Meaning, that when issues that merit debate and disagreement are avoided to prevent conflict, the solution is also avoided. When there's an elephant in the room, acknowledge it-and deal with it. A direct and action-oriented approach boosts morale and, ultimately, the business.

To see other book recommendations please

In next month's issue, we'll find out about the power of **planning**.

*"Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion."*

Jack Welch

## Effective Meetings

As you wait for the meeting to begin, you begin to dread the next hour. These meetings never seem to get anywhere. Plus, half the people attending the meeting seem distracted and the other half frustrated. You've been meeting every week for months and the purpose seems to have gotten lost. You ask yourself, "How did we get here and what can be done about it? And who invented meetings anyway?" Your feeling of dread deepens as you recall that . . . you're supposed to run this meeting! It doesn't have to be this way. Be a leader-take charge!



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- Identify exactly what you want to accomplish in each meeting and clearly communicate your expectations to participants ahead of time.
- Set the tone: The meeting is where critical information is shared and key decisions made as a collaborative effort.
- Make it known that each person is expected to contribute.
- Clarify who is responsible for what by when.
- Remind yourself that it's your responsibility to make sure everyone is engaged and energized by the discussions and by the purpose of the meeting. Create an experience that makes each participant to think of your meetings as necessary and valuable.

Meetings that are focused, effective, and relevant to the mission of the business create the kind of energy that causes people to view your meetings as an opportunity to give and get valuable information. Meetings are necessary in all organizations. The good news is that, managed properly, meetings contribute to the success of the organization. Even better, you can make that happen.

Corley Hanson Associates works with many companies to structure effective meetings. Call to learn how we can help you. If you are on the West Coast, please contact our wonderful team member Judy Seropan in our San Francisco office.

## About Corley Hanson



Corley Hanson Associates provides a unique blend of coaching, facilitating, and consulting to enhance performance and create business results. Corley Hanson works with individuals and teams to build the business.

If you have any questions or would like to talk about your teams, contact us on the East Coast by calling Wendy Hanson or Will Corley at (401) 490-6897; on the West Coast call Judy Seropan at (415) 810-5839. Or, you can e-mail us at [info@corleyhanson.com](mailto:info@corleyhanson.com).

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