

Call an impromptu meeting

Pulling a group of people together at the last minute (something all managers run into from time to time) presents a number of challenges.

Use these strategies to make it work:

Take a moment to plan. Give yourself five minutes. Think about how much time you'll need, who should be invited, exactly what you need to achieve and how you want to achieve it. Do you need to allow some time for questions and answers after making announcement?

Clearly communicate what the meeting is about. When you call an impromptu meeting, employees fear the worst. Let them know up front what the topic is, the estimated duration and what they should bring.

Consider holding a stand-up meeting. If the idea is to keep the discussion brief and the meeting short, having a stand-up meeting encourages people to make concise comments and discourages a lot of chit chat and side conversations. However, don't hold a stand-up meeting if you are making an announcement that will generate a lot of controversy or if people are likely to have a lot questions.

Consider whether you need an agenda. If your meeting is too long to have in a stand-up format, consider sending out a brief agenda for your sit-down, especially if you have more than one topic to discuss.

Follow up with reminders, if necessary. If your meeting happens too quickly to give you an opportunity to provide printed material, ensure that you send details out as soon as possible after the meeting to give people information that they need for reference or to act as a reminder of changes that are taking place.