POST (Running effective Meetings)

What is it?

POST is a deceptively simple framework for running, online or in person, meetings and workshops. From a continuous improvement point of view poorly run meetings drain time and energy, sometimes they're not needed, and other times they don't add much value. POST helps by identifying the:

- **Purpose:** what is the aim of the meeting?
- **Outcomes:** what are the outcomes that are expected to be achieved from it?
- **Structure:** how is the meeting going to be structured and who needs to be involved? What preparation is required?
- **Timing:** what are the meeting timings?

Benefits at a glance …

- meetings produce more value - less waste (!)
- clear purpose to meeting
- pre-assigned roles before the meeting starts
- start on time, end on time
- leave with an action plan - clear next steps
- find out who will do what by when (WWDWBW)
- primed to listen deeply and not interrupt
- an opportunity to hear team members' thoughts and/or use their skill sets

TIP: However well-structured a meeting is, this alone will not ensure its effectiveness. It is the behaviours of those who attend that will most affect the outcomes. Listening, consciously not-interrupting, everyone being encouraged to take turns and, when it is their turn, not hogging the limelight are all positive behaviours that need to be encouraged by the meeting chair. Nancy Kline has identified ten behaviours that generate the finest independent thinking.

When to use it?

Use POST when you want to ensure any face-to-face or virtual meeting is effective whether it is 1:1 or with a team or group of people:

- regular team meeting
- decision-making meeting
- brainstorming meeting
- review meeting
- one-to-one meeting
- strategy meeting

How to use it?

For the **POST** approach to be effective, a certain amount of pre-meeting or workshop planning needs to be done.

The **Focus team** have used the concept of **Standard Work** to agree on how and what to standardise and have developed a template which acts as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to support this approach.

The template as shown below, not only gives structure to pre-meeting planning but also can be used to take notes and capture actions so that they are all stored in one place.
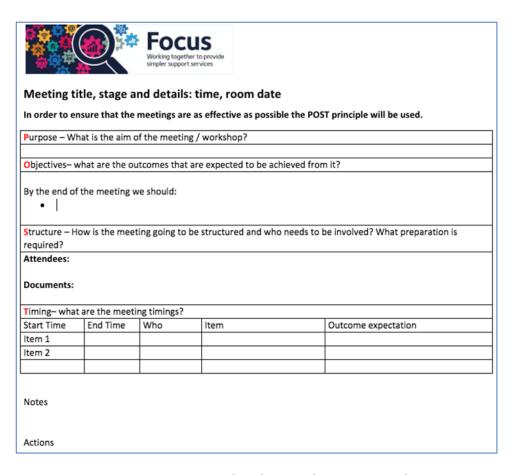
Figure 1: Meeting template that uses the POST approach

TIP: *In the spirit of continuous improvement, find out how effective the meeting was for attendees. Was the meeting meaningful? How would they improve it? Was it a valuable use of their time? Use the Stop, Start, Continue framework to gain feedback.*

Further reading

Kline N (2009). More Time to Think. Fisher King Publishing

'The quality of everything we do depends on the quality of the thinking we do first. The quality of our thinking depends on the way we treat each other while we are thinking.'

Nancy Kline, Founder of Time to Think