

Meeting Magic - A practical guide for business managers who want to make their meetings productive by Katherine Woods and Ingrid Uden

The strapline may not be so snappy but it certainly tells you what the book's about! Hands up who's ever been in a meeting that could have been more productive? The authors, who put all their systems, communications and meeting experience into forming their company *Meeting Magic Ltd*, hope we will feel free to read their slim paperback from cover to cover, or to dip into it, or simply to browse through the various real-life problems and summaries of advice.

The style is friendly and practical, the format is clear to follow and the book is easy to navigate. Line drawing symbols and section headings break up the text and help you find what you need. Each chapter is self-contained and follows a series of sections with which the reader soon becomes familiar:

- problem;
- root cause;
- prevention;
- intervention;
- summary of advice.

Whether the problem is people talking too much or too little, confusion over terminology or difficulty keeping to the agenda, the avoidance of decision-making or manipulation into making the 'right' decision, this book covers them all and much more. The authors suggest that, for example, good communication beforehand to assess expectations, clear guidelines agreed by all, and the display of notes on very large sheets (enabling everyone to see their contribution has been noted) will all contribute to a successful meeting. However, this book also tries to avoid pat answers, delving into why people behave as they do and how they can be handled both sensitively and firmly as necessary.

Some strange comma usage, and a few too many 'outcomes', are minor quibbles; this is a useful, practical guide and one I would recommend to those who find themselves facilitating, arranging or supporting the organisation of meetings both in the workplace and outside it. See www.meetingmagic.co.uk for more information.