

# The MENTOR

July 2004

Published By:  Editor: Sandy Burns

Vol. 1 Issue 1

## TidBits

Achievement is largely the product of steadily rising one's level of aspiration and expectation

-Jack Nicklaus

## In This Issue:

- Management & MAC Meetings
- Topics & Agendas
- Meet the Team
- Why Hire a Consultant



1818 W. Fulton St. Suite 101  
Rapid City, SD 57701

Tel: 605-737-0377  
Fax: 605-718-4046

projectsolutions@rushmore.com

[www.ProjectSolutions.org](http://www.ProjectSolutions.org)

## Management and MAC Meetings

Both Management and Management Advisory Committee Meetings (MAC) serve the same purpose. The meetings are a place where key managers and staff can discuss pressing matters. At these meetings, the members involved discuss key issues that affect the whole company. It is important for teams and groups within an organization to communicate,

and these meetings are meant to do just that.

The procedure goes as follows:

The Chairperson develops a written agenda and distributes it to attendees at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting. In this agenda, the problems/topics must be stated simply, the causes to these problems should be outlined, and the agenda must be limited to no more than three specific subjects. All members must be present at the meeting with their own written solutions. Each person then reads aloud

his/her solution. A brief discussion follows, focusing on the clearest, strongest solution put forth. Finally, the Chairperson makes the decision to implement a recommended solution, investigate further, or make no changes.

The objectives are the same for both MAC and Management Meetings:, They are:



- To improve vertical communication between managers and staff
- To improve horizontal communication among managers
- To select issues of interest and importance
- To assign problems to a specific person to resolve
- To set a specific date and time

*Continued on page 2 MAC*

Continued from page 1 **MAC**

for solutions to be presented back to the group

- To reach workable solutions.

The only real difference between Management Meetings and MAC Meetings are the members that attend. In Management Meetings, the group's highest-level key person will be the Chairperson, who designates the attendees. The attendees include the managers from different departments such as the Operations Manager, the Lead Dispatch, Shop Manager, Yard Manager, and Office Manager. Management Meetings should also be held regularly for at least the Sales Team, Operations Team, and Finance Team. The meetings should at first take place weekly to overcome major issues, then subsiding, as they are resolved.

MAC Meetings include a broad-based membership with the attendees situated in the front-line positions such as Inside Salesperson, Outside Salesperson, Production Staff, Warehouse Staff, Accounting Clerk, and Receptionist. Another difference is that the Chairperson only serves for about a month, passing the title to the next chosen member. All in all, the only difference is that the Management Meetings' members are essentially the "top minds" of the company, with the MAC Meetings' attendees being the "front-line" employees.

## Topics and Agendas

**We continually emphasize the importance of maintaining regularly scheduled manager's meetings for every one of our clients. Without some planning, after several weeks, the meetings can get "flat". The use of a preplanned agenda helps keep the attendees focused, productive and lasting 30 to 60 minutes.**

Agendas are meant to focus Management Meetings on the key issues at hand. They allow attendees proper time to prepare well thought out, written solutions to the issues raised. The Agenda also maximizes the impact of discussions while using the least amount of time necessary for the meetings.

The issues raised in the Agendas are specific points that the attendees should ponder, writing their concise responses in the spaces provided. For example, the Chairperson writes up an Agenda that contains three issues such as Production schedule, Weekly Financial Reports, and Marketing Plans. Under these headings are blank lines in which the members can write their solution. Then the Chairperson generates a discussion after each member reads her/his proposed solution.

For example, during a typical Management Meeting, when the Marketing Plan is discussed, the following solutions may be proposed:

- Assign one or more persons to gather information and prices about media outlets.
- See if schedules permitting allow employees to host a charity event, workshop, or seminar.
- Determining out the costs and benefits of marketing.
- Decide what the company wants to market, for example, price, quality, product, or service.
- Determine the target market.

After the Meeting, the Agenda is now closed, and all the attendees receive a copy of the issues and solutions for their records. Anyone else affected by the solutions will also receive a copy. Also, the Chairperson writes up the minutes of the Meeting. This page long report is a summary of what was discussed in the Meeting. The time the Meeting started and ended is also stated. All three issues are written, along with the solutions, as well as the definitions, rules, and objectives of certain reports. For example, if a Flash Report is being introduced to the group, the minutes will describe what a Flash Report is and its parameters.

**By communicating these procedures, goals and objectives, the company and the employees will be on the same page.**

By communicating these procedures, goals, and objectives to the attendees, the company will be on the same page towards fixing problems within the company. The previous Agendas should be kept in the front pocket of the Manager's Manual (you're still using yours, right?) to be in eyesight every time it is opened. All of the closed Agendas should be kept in reverse-chronological order. It is important to stay on top of employees to make sure they are following up on their new

## Meet The Team

**Sandra Burns** is the *President/Principal Consultant* of Project Solutions. She has an engineering degree from the Colorado School of Mines and worked in Project Management for over 20 years. She is an expert in Cost and Schedule control, government contracting, rebaselining, and turning around project problems involving cost, schedule, and performance. She also assists construction businesses in bidding, estimating, and sound business practices.

**Greg Hansen** is the *Senior Consulting Project Manager* at Project Solutions. With 26 years of business ownership experience himself, Mr. Hansen understands the joys and pains each business owner goes through.

Mr. Hansen has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and an MBA from The University of South

Dakota Graduate School of Business, Academic credentials are crucial but perhaps the 200,000 frequent flier miles he's accumulated traveling coast-to-coast helping business owners and managers is more indicative of his broad range of experience, perspective and commitment he brings to each client.



### Why Hire a Consultant?

This question is easy to answer. Consultants are able to view a situation through a fresh and objective eye. Also, Consultants often have specific expertise, and data, to contrast and compare with other Clients in similar situations.

The role of a Consultant is not an adversarial one, although those involved may get that impression. A Consultant is there to help, observe, recommend, and train, where necessary. Providing information that is industry specific can help guide decision makers that are often well intentioned, but not completely knowledgeable about operations. For example, the decision maker may be content with the company's profit margin, when a few changes could lead to a much higher profit.

In summary, a Consultant can supply industry expertise in a constructive way. Don't be afraid of a Consultant. The benefits to be gained far outweigh the money you will spend using the services of qualified Consultants.

He specializes in consulting projects for firms in a wide array of industries, particularly the construction, engineering, retail, food service and light manufacturing.

He is a recognized corporate specialist for capital asset pricing models customer service training, job costing, family ownership issues, shareholder exit strategies and executive compensation.

**James Shaffer** is a *Computer Technical Consultant* for project Solutions. James has 7 years of experience in computer systems administration, network administration and software management. James has an A.S. in Computer Science, an A.S. in Electronics Technology and is working towards a B.S. in Computer Engineering. James also has experience in cabling, television and manufacturing.