Meeting Organization And Management

刘智勇 著

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Chapter 1 Meeting And Meeting Organization

Meeting is the rally to discuss issues systematically. It is a kind of way and method universally used in modern society. Organization and administration of the meeting is a science and a kind of art. In order to improve quality and level of the meeting, research of the meeting should be strengthened, relevant theory and knowledge of the meeting and its organization should be fully understood and commanded.

1.1 The meaning of a meeting

Meeting is not strange to us and is very common and popular in modern society. We all have contacted or attended meeting, and have certain sense and understanding to it. But it's not easy to define "meeting" accurately for us. Up to now, people have different views on the meeting. The following are some typical viewpoints:

Management of Meeting and Utilization of Time (compiled by Britain Institute of Coal Administrative) points out: "Holding a meeting refers to the activity that two or more people get together in the same place for more than 20 minutes." This view is not very accurate, because many activities can gather two people or more for

more than 20 minutes, like playing chess, playing games, watching programs, but they are not meeting. Obviously, this view has too broad denotation.

An explanation from Wei's University Dictionary of U.S.A. says, "it is a kind of meeting behavior or process", "an official and common exchange of opinions", "a discussion to the thing which two or more persons care about". This explanation cannot justify itself, many things as friends' visits, mails communication, things discussion on the dinner table cannot be called a meeting.

The book *Management of Meeting* chiefly edited by Liao Shichang makes definition of meeting as follows: "Meeting is a common, systematical, purposeful, short-time collective rally that two or more persons participate in". This definition has great progress in reflecting the basic characteristics of the meeting, but worth discussing deeply. For example, a sports match conforms to these characteristics, but it is not a meeting. Moreover, "above two" and the word "collectivity" are repeated since a collective activity, definitely should have more than two persons. Therefore, Liao's definition, generally speaking, is tenable. But if we definite it strictly, something should be consummated.

If a definition of meetings should be given, we must hold its basic characteristic. A meeting has various types and formats. If we abandon its concrete content, no matter what meeting it is, it should have the following common characteristics.

First, it is purposeful. All meetings are convened for some certain purpose and need. Otherwise, it is unnecessary to hold the meeting. The meeting's topic is the concrete manifestation of its purpose.

Second, it is organized. All meetings are convened by certain

organs, organizations and groups. It is not the activity that people gather together spontaneously and freely. This separates from the spontaneous party which is not to be organized.

Third, it has the characteristics of collectivity. That means it is an activity of at least two or more persons rather than an activity of only one person. This differentiates it from the activities of one or two persons, such as making an appointment.

When defining "meetings", these characteristics should be reflected. To sum up, we can give a definition to meeting: A meeting is a temporarily collective activity which is organized to discuss and decide certain issues.

As a social activity to discuss and decide something, meeting has a long history. It originates from tribe democratic system in the late primitive society. The clan meeting in primitive society is "a democratic meeting in which all adults in the clan have equal rights to vote" (Page 84, Volume I, Anthology of Marx and Engels). It is the concrete manifestation adopted to poor productivity of the primitive democratic system. Later, with the foundation of countries and increase of social affairs, more and more meetings appeared. And they kept developing and changing from content to form. As a way of work, meeting has its popularity and none of the country can work without it.

In our country, meetings have become an important way for the party, enterprises, public institutions and even the social groups to discuss business or make decisions. And it is the crucial method for various areas, departments, units to propagandize and carry out the route, guideline and policy of the state and party, to unify the thought, enhance understanding, arrange work, exchange information and solve problems. In our country, meeting system

from top to bottom has been established. The party and the country also systematize the form of meeting through the party constitution and the legal stripe to show the collective leadership.

Meetings have broad sense and narrow sense. Meetings, such as sports meeting, debate, populace assemble and dance party don't belong to the research object in this book. This book focuses on its narrow sense, which refers to different meetings as the party and political institutions, the social organizations and the associations convene to discuss official business, make decisions, deploy the work, exchange experience and information, and so on. These meetings are usually arranged and organized by the secretary department, or special secretary organizations are established to handle them.

1.2 Integrant parts of a meeting

The integrant parts of a meeting refer to the factors a meeting consists of. All meetings have integrant parts. Lack of certain essential factors, the meeting is unable to be carried on, even if it is carried on, anticipated effect is hard to be achieved.

Actually there is no common view about how many integrant parts a meeting has. But the basic understanding is unanimous, and a meeting includes following parts:

1.2.1 Name of a meeting

This is the most basic factor of a meeting. Any meeting, whether its scale is large or small, its level is high or low, must have a name. The name of a meeting is the carrier of its expression, exchange and dissemination. If there is no name or the name is not

very accurate, it will affect the meeting. Therefore, before the meeting is held, the meeting sponsors should give a suitable name to the meeting. The name of a meeting generally includes sponsor's name, time (a session of order), content, and so on. And the concrete name relies on these elements of the meeting.

1.2.2 Topic of a meeting

The topic of a meeting is issues that should be decided, or problems that should be discussed, researched and solved. Each meeting should have an explicit guiding idea, its concrete duty and the anticipated goal. All meetings should have their topics first. Without a topic, it can only be called a convergence rather than a meeting. If the topic of a meeting is not explicit, it is a blind meeting with low quality. Therefore, the topic is the reason and the base of a meeting, and is the premise of holding a successful one.

1.2.3 Sponsor of a meeting

The sponsor of a meeting refers to the legal institution and organization to decide and hold the meeting. No sponsor, no meeting. The sponsor of a meeting is generally judged by the name of the meeting and the unit who informs the meeting. As an interior meeting of the institution, the institution or the department is the sponsor of the meeting. If a meeting crosses areas, and trades (profession), the sponsor of the meeting is possibly the local (central) leading organization at all levels or the controlling organization of the profession. If the meeting's content is unitary and involves only one department, there is only one sponsor of the meeting. If the content is comprehensive and involves many departments, there are two or more sponsors of the meeting. The sponsor of the meeting is

responsible for the meeting's guide, organization and management.

1.2.4 Attendant

The attendant is the participant of the meeting. It constitutes the main and object relations with the sponsor, and the two is indispensable. The attendants in the broad sense include the host, the secretary, the attending people, and the service staff. The attendants in the narrow sense only refer to attending personnel. Formal meeting generally divides the attending personnel as formal attendant, a non-voting delegate, and the leader of the representative group or the head of delegation, meeting's secretary general, the meeting's secretariat, and the meeting's service personnel. The attendants are determined by the scale, nature, content of the meeting.

1.2.5 Procedure of a meeting

The procedure is arranged according to the topic of the meeting, namely the organization process of the unit meeting (stage meeting, small meeting of the whole meeting). Generally it includes three stages: the start, the process and the end. It is obviously continuous and in proper order. The organization of meeting process is based on the agenda. No matter how large the meeting's size is, it has its own procedure and it's only different in the degree of complexity. Meeting with few topics and small scale often goes straight to the point, and the procedure is quite simple. But the meeting with more topics and large scale is usually complex, and it is also quite strict and grave. If the meeting lasts only one day and there is only one topic, then the meeting procedure and the summit agenda and the schedule are united, and do not have obvious boundary.

1.2.6 Time of a meeting

The time of meetings includes two parts: the date of holding a meeting and its duration. The meeting is one kind of synchronic activity. Only at the same time can it be possible for people to gather together to hold a meeting. Therefore, time is an absolutely necessary factor for a meeting. Holding a meeting must be appointed first, and people must be informed in advance, otherwise the meeting can not be held or can not be held successfully.

1.2.7 Place of a meeting

The place is the spatial condition for a meeting. It has two parts, including meeting site and meeting place. The site refers to the region the meeting convenes, and the place refers to the appointed hall it convenes. Only when people gather together in the same designated place and at the same time can the meeting be able to be carried on. Nowadays even though the communication technology is highly developed, people in some degree may not be limited by regions, they can use modern tools as telephone, television and they can participate the same meeting in different places, the meeting site still exists, because every information terminal is in fact a meeting place but only a special form of it.

The integrant parts of meeting roughly reflect the related content of meeting's organization work. Keeping the integrant parts in mind is helpful to the preparation of the meeting.

1.3 Types of a meeting

There are a great variety of meetings. To understand and have a good command of the common sense and organization art of each

concrete meeting, we need to carry on the classification. Through the classification, we can change the complex things into simple ones and grasp the individual characters from general characters; and classification is helpful for us to understand and grasp the organizing principle and method of each kind of meetings.

The classification of meeting is based on a certain standard. Different standards have different results. No classification standards, no types. There are many classification standards of meeting and we will introduce some important ones in the following.

1.3.1 Classified according as it is foreign related or not

- (1) Domestic meetings, in which there is no foreign attendant and the meeting is only on domestic issues.
- (2) International meeting. This means it is an international meeting attended by multi-country attendants, involving political, economic, cultural and academic issues. It may also be divided specifically as intergovernmental meeting and folk meeting; bilateral meeting and multilateral meetings, etc.

1.3.2 Classified by the scale of meetings

- (1) Small meeting, in which there are a few people taking part. The attendants are at least 3 persons and no more than 100 persons.
- (2) Medium meeting. It refers to a meeting with attendance varying from 100 to 1,000 persons.
- (3) Large meeting. It refers to a meeting with attendance between 1,000 and several thousand, but no more than 10,000 persons.
- (4) Extra large meeting. It refers to a meeting with attendance of over ten thousand, even with several hundred thousand people,

such as National Day celebration, a party, the public trial, etc.

This kind of population standard is only approximate, not absolute. Moreover, the scale of the meeting is also relative. For different sponsors, the scale of a meeting is different even though it has the same number of attendants.

1.3.3 Classified by the organization party

- (1) Meeting organized by the party organization, such as party member representative meeting, party branch meeting and so on.
- (2) Meeting organized by organs of state power, such as National People's Congress at all levels, standing committee and so on.
- (3) Meeting organized by state administrative organs, such as State Council plenary session, governor work meeting and so on.
- (4) Meeting organized by democratic parties and the social groups, such as the National People's Congress of Democratic League, Communist Youth League Representative Meeting and so on.
- (5) Meeting organized by enterprises and institutions, such as staff congress, trade union member representative meeting and so on.

1.3.4 Classified by the meeting's level

- (1) Meeting at central level. Generally it refers to nationwide and trans-province meeting convened by the central government authorities or organizations.
- (2) Meeting at local level. It refers to meeting of province, city, county which convened by local authorities and organizations at all levels.

In addition, it can be classified according to the attendant's position, such as the ministers' meeting, the governors' meeting, the mayors' meeting, the bureau chief meeting, the department head

meeting, the section chief meeting and so on.

1.3.5 Classified according as it is regularly held or not

- (1) Routine meeting. It is also called a regular meeting, referring to a meeting held in regular time.
- (2) Temporary Meeting. It refers to the non-periodically meeting held to handle problems occurring at sudden time.

1.3.6 Classified by the meeting agenda

- (1) Preparation Meeting. It is a kind of meeting convened to prepare for official meeting.
- (2) Official Meeting. It refers to the formal meeting after preparation meeting.
- (3) Grouping Meeting. During a large scale meeting, according to meeting's need, the meeting is held by groups.
- (4) Plenary Session. It refers to meetings which all attending personnel participate in.

1.3.7 Classified by the method and media of holding the meeting

- (1) Telephone meeting. It refers to the meeting which uses telephone as media to transmit the meeting content, which is adopted to the meeting with long distance and emergent condition.
- (2) Radio and TV meeting. It refers to the meeting which uses radio or TV as the media to transmit the meeting content. It is a kind of one-way communication, adapted to the meeting with features of mobilization, transmission and propagation.
- (3) Pen-talk meeting. The participants will not meet together and not talk with each other, but use letters or articles as media to

discuss problems and exchange ideas and opinions.

1.3.8 Classified by the characteristics of the meeting

- (1) Delegation Meeting. It refers to the meeting with the legislation or the right to decide rules and regulations according to the law or the related organization regulation, such as Party Congress, National People's Congress and each kind of delegates' meeting.
- (2) The policy-making meeting. This kind of meeting is mainly to solve and handle some problems, rally related personnel to find the counter measures, discuss plans and take measures.
- (3) Information communication meeting. It aims to exchange information and situation of each other, including reporting information to superiors, notifying information to subordinates and multi exchange, such as the common relayed meeting, the report meeting.
- (4) Consultative meeting. It refers to the meeting to fulfill duty, coordinate relations, and ravel out contradictory. There are two kinds of forms: First, compulsorily coordinated meeting. Namely the superior convenes subordinates and make decisions in the meeting. Then subordinates must obey unconditionally. Second, coordinated meeting. Usually two or more sides agree to hold a meeting to discuss issues equally, and reach agreement through the talk.
- (5) Commemoration meeting. It refers to the meeting which is to commemorate the important historical personage, event and the significant holiday.
- (6) Commendation meeting. It refers to the meeting held to encourage advanced group and individual, such as the model worker meeting, commendation meeting, awarding meeting, and so on.
- (7) Summary and evaluation meeting. It refers to the meeting whose content is to review the past, summarize the experience, look