

Company buffet business meeting

You have to arrange for a buffet lunch in your company's conference room for a very cosmopolitan group of guests plus some people from your company. Your task is to plan the whole buffet. Here are some points you might want to look at:

Budget and prices

Variety of foods

Dealing with special dietary needs

Food likely to be popular and unpopular with different nationalities and cultures

Types of drinks

Amount of food needed

Seating arrangements

Decorations

Times

Cutlery, crockery, serviettes etc.

Other cultural differences

Final decision on which food and drink

Final decision on amounts of food and drink

Any other business

Choose which of the points above you both think you need to discuss and then decide how much time you think you will need to discuss each point. Then decide what order you will discuss the points in.

Suggested language:

Why don't we (start with)...?

Surely, (the most important point is)...?

Don't you think (... is more of a priority)?

May I suggest (moving onto the next point)?

It might be better to (spend less time on that one and more on the next)

To my mind...

If you ask me...

Know what I think?...

When you have agreed, fill in the first three columns in the table below:

Agenda point	Topic	Estimated discussion time needed	Action agreed	Action to be taken by:
1				
2				

As a class/ larger group, choose who will be the chair of your meeting and therefore whose agenda you will use. The chair needs to guide the group through the points in order and help the group reach agreement.

Try to think of some useful phrases for the chair to:

ask for people's opinions (A)

move the meeting on (M)

bring the group to agreement (B)

Label the sentences below with A, M and/or B depending on their use(s):

We'll have to agree to disagree
Shall we take a vote on it?
Let's set that point aside for a minute
If no one has anything else to add...
Moving on...
The next point of the agenda is...
Can we keep any other questions until a.o.b?
Let's go with the majority on that one.
Shall we get started?
Any final points to make?
I think that about wraps it up.
Let's leave point 3 there, shall we?
Well, thank you all for coming
Well, that's been very productive, I think.
So, are we all agreed then?
We don't seem to be making much progress on this point, so...
To sum up,...

If I can paraphrase what you've all been saying...
Does anyone (else) have an opinion on this?
Who'd like to give their opinion first?
First, let's talk about...
So, we all seem to agree that...
The consensus seems to be that...

When you have finished, discuss how well the meeting went. What characteristics are most important for a chair of a meeting? For example:

Being strict about following the agenda
Making everyone feel comfortable with a bit of small talk at the beginning
Giving your own opinion strongly
Giving the casting vote
Giving everyone a chance to speak
Taking minutes
Calming people down
Playing the devil's advocate