

13. Not Taking Time to Assure Mutual Understanding – Learn the issues facing other members. Explain your own position. Ask the other people to repeat back in their own words what they hear you saying. This will head-off frustration and reluctance to cooperate.
14. Uneven Preparation – Varying Levels of Understanding – Set up a way for all people to be prepared to talk about the issues at the same level of understanding.
15. Premature Motions – Don't make a motion until the problem is adequately discussed and analyzed. If you can't agree on the problem, you probably can't agree on the solution (the motion). Premature motions divide the group and create artificial disagreements.

By the way, you don't have to be at Pratt to make Pratt-falls...these happen in meetings everywhere – from college Program Board to corporate board rooms!

Developed by Michael De Rosa, Florida Institute of Technology

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PRATT-FALLS OF MEETINGS

Why “Pratt-Falls”? Well, I previously work at Pratt Institute (NY) and have had the opportunity to run into all of these THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN MEETING

1. No Clear, Agreed-Upon Agenda- It is important to have a written, pre-meeting agenda to all the members. Groups must agree to go toward a certain goal. As they said in Alice in Wonderland, “If you don’t know here you are going, how will you ever know if you get there?”
2. Leaving the Process of the Meeting to Fate- Separate out the power (authority) and content (subject matter) from the PROCESS (how the meeting proceeds). A meeting leader must facilitate, not wait for luck. Facilitating is helping the group stay on track, on time, reaching for the goal, etc.
3. Speeding Off Without a Map – Ask: Where does this meeting fit in the overall plan for dealing with the issue? Take time for the planning process – GO SLOW NOW TO GO FAST LATER!
4. Missing Purposes – Be clear (by using your agenda) whether you’re planning a procedure (drawing the map) for dealing with a topic, or actually dealing with it. In other words, are you laying out the steps you’ll take or taking a step. One purpose at a time.
5. Too Many Agenda Items – Always ask “Are these goals realistic within the time frame?” Don’t set you group up for failure with an over-ambitious agenda.
6. No Mutual Agreement on What he Problem Is
7. Jumping-In With a Solution – There is a danger in coming in with or arriving at a pet solution before clearly identifying or agreeing on the problem with other involved. “Buy-in” assures support.
8. Shifting Focus – Stay on the same subject; use the same process. For example, either brainstorm or evaluate ideas, not both at the same time.
9. Lack of Visual Helpers – Find a way for participants to follow the subject as the meeting proceeds. Use audio-visual helpers to help everyone focus on the content flow.
10. Unclear or Incomplete Action Items or Decisions – Pin down the who, what, when, where, why, and how at the meeting. Check out all agreements made during the meeting at the end of the meeting.
11. Too Many Participants: The Wrong Participants: Missing Key People – When agendas have many items, more people need to be there even though they are only involved in one item.
12. Meeting Being Dominated by One or Two People – When this occurs pull back and ask someone to facilitate. Don’t miss the opportunity to make the most of you staff; make the most of the opportunity to participate yourself too!