THE FIVE MINUTE MEETING

In order to make meetings more productive and waste less of your time, it's important that you implement the 5-minute meeting in your practice. Being in non-productive meetings is wasteful for all parties involved. It's very frustrating to be bombarded with questions from team members that could be answered if the team members took time to think them through prior to interrupting you. By following this process, team members will often have worked through the issue to the point of arriving at the right solution.

The primary objective of the 5-minute meeting is to build more initiative and strategic thinking for team members so they will rely less on you for the solutions.

If there is a problem to discuss, the problem needs to be fleshed out and completely exhausted prior to setting up a meeting or discussing the problem in meetings that are already scheduled. Below is a list of questions to give your team members to help them prepare for a meeting with you. If a team member needs help with any of the questions below, they should go to someone other than you (you should be the last resort). If you are the only source to one of the questions, they should email you prior to the meeting to ask the question.

Here are the questions your team should answer prior to engaging with you: (Not all questions may be relevant in each situation.)

- What is the problem?
- What is the core root/cause of the problem?
- What are the negative implications of the problem?
- Is the problem costing the firm and/or client's money and/or time? If so, how much?
- What are the proposed solutions?
- What solution do you think will work best and why? (Be very specific)
- How does your solution affect the team? Clients? You? Me?
- Who else needs to be involved in implementing the solution, and what role do they need to play?
- How much money and/or time will it take to implement your proposed solution?
- (Other – you may have additional questions to add)

A part of the reason this 5-minute meeting works is the time allotted. When time is compressed, people are forced to cover the most important parts. Conversely, if there is more time allotted, team members will absorb the additional time given. The key for you is to set the tone early on this rule by excusing team members from an interaction with you if they show up unprepared.

