



Too formal for most business meetings

Apart from when you are trying to be humorous, the language below is too formal or polite for most business meetings. Are there any examples which you think you could use in any of your own business meetings?

- "Please do come in and make yourself comfortable."
- "I hope our country/ city/ new office meets with your approval."
- "Ladies and gentlemen/ Gentlemen/ Sirs..."
- "If I might have your attention for just a second or two..."
- "I would like to call the meeting to order."
- "On behalf of ..., let me formally welcome you to..." / "We are absolutely thrilled to welcome you all to..."
- "Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to introduce the people who have graciously agreed to share their time with us today."
- "On my immediate right is"
- "I think you have all already had the pleasure of meeting my colleague here John Elton."
- "Apologies have been received from Alex Case and Julie Walters."
- "I hope my attempt to email you all the agenda for this meeting was successful."
- "We have an awful lot to get through today, so if you could possibly keep the timings on the agenda in mind that would be a great help and would be very much appreciated."
- "The chair recognizes Michael Borodin."
- "I would now like to call on Bruce Vain to say a few words."
- "Seconded." / "I second the motion."
- "While I respect the opinion of my esteemed colleague,..."
- "Mr Chairman/ Madam Chairman,..."
- "If I might be so bold as to attempt to summarize your point,..."
- "I move to accept Mr Smith's proposal."
- "Are there any corrections to the minutes?... If there are no (further) corrections, the minutes stand."
- "The chair rules that the motion is out of order."
- "I propose that we have a vote on the matter."
- "All those in favour say Aye." / "Those in favour please raise their right hands and say Aye."
- "Those opposed will raise their left hands and say No."
- "The Ayes have it." / "I proclaim the vote passed." / "The ayes have it and the motion is adopted/ carried."
- "The noes have it and the motion is lost."

Change the phrases above to make them more informal. They don't have to be very informal, just suitable for at least some of your own business meetings.

What are the functions of the phrases above?

What are the general differences between formal and informal language?



Suggested answers

- "Please do come in and make yourself comfortable." – "Please come in and take a seat"/ "Please sit anywhere you like"
- "I hope...meets with your approval." – "What do you think about...(so far)?"
- "Ladies and gentlemen/ Gentlemen/ Sirs..." – "Hi everyone"
- "If I might have your attention for just a second or two..." – (cough cough)/ "Sorry. Can I...?"
- "I would like to call the meeting to order." – "Right. Shall we get started?"
- "We are absolutely thrilled to welcome you all to..." – "Welcome to..."/ "It's a pleasure to welcome you to..."
- "Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to introduce the people who have graciously agreed to share their time with us today." – "Before we start, I'd like to introduce..."
- "On my immediate right is" – "This is..."
- "I think you have all already had the pleasure of meeting my colleague here John Elton." – "I think you all know my colleague John"/ "Is there anyone who hasn't met John?"
- "Apologies have been received from Alex Case and Julie Walters." – "Alex and Julie can't make it because..."/ "Unfortunately, Alex and Julie had to go to..."
- "I hope my attempt to email you all the agenda for this meeting was successful." – "Did you all receive the agenda?"
- "We have an awful lot to get through today, so if you could possibly keep the timings on the agenda in mind that would be a great help and would be very much appreciated." – "There's a lot to get through, so let's try and stick to the timings on the agenda"
- "The chair recognizes Michael Borodin." – "Yes, Michael. Did you want to say something?"
- "I would now like to call on Bruce Vain to say a few words." – "Bruce, can you give your opinion on this?"
- "Seconded."/ "I second the motion." – "I second that."/ "I agree."/ "I support that."
- "While I respect the opinion..." – "I can see your point of view, but..."
- "Mr Chairman/ Madam Chairman,..." – (use the chair's name)
- "If I might be so bold as to attempt to summarize your point,..." – "So, what you are saying is..."/ "So basically, you think..., right?"
- "I move to accept Mr Smith's proposal." – "I think we should go with/ I like John's idea"
- "If there are no (further) corrections, the minutes stand." – "Does anyone have any comment on the minutes of the last meeting?"
- "The chair rules that the motion is out of order." – "I'm afraid that's not the topic of today's meeting"/ "We'll have to talk about that another time (I'm afraid)"
- "I propose that we have a vote on the matter." – "Let's have a vote on it."/ "Shall we decide it with a vote?"/ "Shall we have a show of hands?"
- "All those in favour say Aye." – "How many people agree?"
- "Those opposed will raise their left hands" – "If you don't agree, put up your hands now."
- "The Ayes have it." – "It seems that most people agree, so that's what we will do."
- "The noes have it and the motion is lost." – "Most people seem to disagree, so we'll have to think of something else."