

Note taking is key to value creation.

What is the purpose of this article?

- 1) Help people understand the value of note taking.
- 2) Identify some possible ways to take notes.

What are the critical learnings in this article?

- 1) In today's fast changing world you need to be constantly learning. Future value creation demands learning.
- 2) Note taking is different from transcription and minutes.
- 3) If you don't take notes, it's likely you'll either forget or incorrectly remember what you heard.
- 4) Note taking improves your understanding and memory.
- 5) You need a structure process to maximise the value of note taking.

How is personal note taking different from transcription and minutes?

- 1) Transcription is a word for word documentation of what was said. E.g. transcription that is taken in court. This enables later review and analysis of what was said.
- 2) Minutes establishes a common understanding of key items in a meeting, such as; Decisions; who will do what by when; issues; facts; assumptions. Some examples are: board of directors minutes and company executive committee minutes.
- 3) Personal note taking is focused on learning and the association recollection of what was learned. You process what you are hearing, seeing, feeling, and thinking. Your notes reflect your key learnings.

Why must you take notes in presentations and meetings?

- 1) If you don't take notes, it's likely you'll either forget or incorrectly remember what you heard.
- 2) "People forget 40%-80% of what they hear immediately. Half the information people do recall, is recalled incorrectly"¹
- 3) The process of taking notes force you to think about what you are learning.

What are some other benefits of note taking?

- 1) Keeps your mind and body active.
- 2) Reduces drowsiness.
- 3) Helps you identify insights and organize your learnings.
- 4) Provides a record for later review and learning.

What are some ways to take notes?

Five ways to take notes:

- 1) An outline: write down the key points and sub points
- 2) The Cornell method:
 - a) Divide each page into two vertical sections. The right side is Notes, which are the notes you take in the meeting. Usually done in outline format. Left side is Cues, which are the main points, or questions answers, in the corresponding Notes. The Cues are usually done after the meeting, while reviewing Notes
 - b) There is a Summary section at the end, summarizing the entire meeting.
- 3) Mind Map: this is a drawing of the inter-relationships between complex or abstract ideas. Visuals help with memory and learning.
- 4) Flow Notes: Combines text, arrows, diagram, etc. The intent is to maximize your learning while taking notes.
- 5) Writing on handout slides: Write your notes on the handout slides.

What are some note taking hints?

- 1) You are NOT a transcribing machine, writing down every word you hear or see.
- 2) You are processing what you see and hear, actively thinking and learning
- 3) Focus on the main points.
- 4) Write down: questions you have, actions to take later, and thoughts/learnings that occurred to you.
- 5) Be concise: use abbreviations, symbols, and bullets. Don't write complete sentences.
- 6) After the meeting, review your notes. Good time to add summaries, questions, action items, and additional learnings. You may rewrite your notes.

Which is better: taking notes by hand or on your computer keyboard?

- 1) Any kind of note taking is better than no note taking.
- 2) Some research shows that handwritten notes require more thinking and thus improve learning and memory.
- 3) Some research shows that people taking notes on computers and phones are distracted and doing things other than focusing on learning from the meeting.
- 4) Computer keyboard note taking has the risk that you become a transcription machine rather than a thinker and learner.

What are your next steps?

- 1) Experiment with different note taking systems.
- 2) Gradually improve over time.
- 3) Remember, what's easiest to do isn't what's best to do.

Footnotes

¹ Lindsay Wizowski, Theresa Harper, and Tracy Hutchings, *Writing Health Information for Patients and Families 4th Edition* (Hamilton Health Sciences, 2014), Page 5

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