How Do You Get Meeting Participants to Follow Up on Action Items?

The Problem:

Too many meeting leaders struggle with team members who don't follow up on action items thereby slowing down the progress of the overall team. Worse yet, this negative behavior can undermine the credibility of the meeting leader and spread throughout the rest of the team. Before this happens to you, try a few of these techniques…

Try these techniques….

- Document all action items on a flip chart or whiteboard so that they are visible to everyone
- If you're conducting a virtual meeting, you can use a virtual whiteboard to document actions (if not available, be sure to repeat them verbally for the scribe)
- For each action item include the owner, task, and due date
- Repeat the task wording to the owner and ask if he/she has questions or concerns
- If the action item owner has concerns, elicit a volunteer to help them with the task
- **Ask the owner to suggest a due date (don't just assign one)**
- If concerned, follow up with the action item owner a few days prior to the due date to check on progress
- Suggest a ground rule that if an action item owner can't complete an action item on time, he/she is expected to work with another team member to get it resolved by the due date
- Establish an efficient action item management database/system (e.g. Eroom, Sharepoint, Online group, etc.)
- If the action item owner arrives unprepared, ask them to still provide a read out to the team (don't let them just privately provide you an excuse before the meeting)
- Verbally review all action items at the end of the meeting
- Include all action items in the meeting notes and ensure they are also pasted into the body of the meeting notes email

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