

It Should Have Been an Email!

Running Effective Meetings

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Webinar overview

Identifying the challenges

Planning for meetings

Chairing productive and inclusive meetings

Evaluating your meetings

Check-in polls

1. How many hours a week do you spend in meetings?
2. How many days did you have 2-4 hours of back-to-back meetings last week?
3. How often do you feel your presence was not necessary at a meeting?



Identifying the challenges

How does our meeting culture need to shift as we move into a post-COVID workplace?



Organizations are experiencing meeting overload

From February 2020 to February 2022, the average Microsoft Teams user:

- Attended more than twice the number of meetings
- More than tripled their time spent in meetings
- Had little time to get actual work done



Why are we meeting so often?

During the pandemic, some leaders used meetings to confirm remote employees were actually working.

It also became a way for us to connect more now that we're working in hybrid and remote settings.



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Why are meetings leaving us so drained?

All meetings aren't the problem – it's bad meetings!

- Recycled agenda items
- Too many people
- One person dominates
- They stretch on and on





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One Company's Trick to Getting 95,000 Hours Back? Canceling Meetings

Meetings have proliferated—now everyone just wants them to end. 'Sometimes it's just someone talking nonsense about something'





Alternative Solutions

- Meeting Diets
- Days with no meetings (No Meeting Fridays)
- Limiting meetings to 15-30 minutes
- Saying no to meetings





Results of great meetings:

- Generate new ideas
- Spark conversation and innovation
- Engage employees
- Include many voices
- Develop action plans
- Lead to productive companies





Group discussion #1

Reflect on your current meeting culture:

- What challenges are you experiencing and what is in your control to change?
- What successes have you had and how can you amplify their impact?



Planning for meetings

Ensuring necessary, focused and productive meetings.

Conduct a meeting audit

- Meeting alternatives
- Frequency
- Duration
- Attendees
- Objective(s)





Prepare and circulate an agenda

- Consider a rolling agenda
- Invite attendees to add agenda items
- Consider time required for each agenda item
- Give thought to order
- Structure unstructured discussion

Meeting agenda

- 1. Icebreaker (15 mins.)**
- 2. National updates (10 mins.)**
- 3. Project updates (15 mins.)**
- 4. Open discussion (20 mins.)**



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Meeting agenda

**Review needs assessment
Interview results and identify
top 5 training needs.**



Assign roles

- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Note taker
- Technical support
- Devil's advocate
- Vibes watcher





Manage meeting dynamics in advance of your meeting

- Provide information/materials in advance of a discussion
- Conduct pre-meeting conversations, when necessary
- Consider the impact of impact of power dynamics
- Anything else?



Chairing productive and inclusive meetings

"Create a safe space where everybody feels comfortable and empowered to speak up and speak out."

– Emily Stevens



Establish and reinforce norms

- Start on time and end on time
- Be present and focused
- Respect confidentiality
- Listen to learn, not speak
- Be assertive, when necessary
- Anything else?





Manage meeting derailers



- Latecomers
- Agenda hijackers
- Interrupters
- Quiet participants
- Multi-taskers



Keep it engaging

- Team building
- Small group discussions
- Communication tools: chat, whiteboard, polls, slides
- Effective brainstorming, problem solving, decision-making discussions



End with action items

- What did you determine in the meeting?
- What are the steps going forward?
- Who is responsible for what and by when?



Group discussion #2:

Think about the meetings you chair:

- What are your biggest challenges?
- How might you shift your approach moving forward?



Evaluating your meetings

"Improving meetings is not just an opportunity to enhance the performance of our companies. It is also a way to positively impact the lives of our people." – Patrick Lencioni

Post-meeting actions: self-reflection

1. Did you achieve your objective(s)?
2. Were you an effective chair?
3. What went well?
4. What would you change?
5. What new approach might you try next time?



Check-in with attendees

- Did you feel heard?
- Were you comfortable expressing your opinions?
- What did you most appreciate about today's meeting?
- Did we act in accordance with our group agreements around meeting norms?
- What would have made you feel more included?
- What did you learn?
- Was the meeting a good use of your time?
- What might have made the meeting better?



Takeaways

Planning effective meetings takes intentionality, preparation, active facilitation, action steps, and post-meeting evaluation.



Further resources

- New York Times, [How to Run More Effective Meetings](#)
- Priya Parker, [The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why it Matters](#)
- HBR, [To Build an Inclusive Culture, Start with Inclusive Meetings](#)
- Washington Post, [Death by a thousand meetings: How to reduce video-call overload](#)
- Friday, [That Meeting Should Have Been An Email: How To Solve It](#)
- Chronicle of Higher Education, [How to Run a Good meeting](#)



Our contact information

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