

How to make every meeting matter

Meetings - a gain or drain in your day?

Meetings are a big part of how we spend our time. When they work well they support collaboration and decision making. When they don't work they're a drain on our day.

- Average time in meetings tripled between Feb 2020 and 2022
- Remote meetings increased by 60%
- Meetings rated as #1 killer of productivity.

Coach yourself question

How can you support everyone to contribute in a meeting?



Ideas for action

1. Use questions or decisions to create agendas

Having an agenda makes little difference to the effectiveness of a meeting – it's what's on the agenda that matters.

Instead of traditional bullet-point agendas which list out topics, use questions and decisions to drive the agenda.

This puts a focus on the meeting's purpose and encourages meaningful discussion and decision-making.

Sounds like:

- 📌 Question on cash flow – How do we increase our cash flow by 10% next financial year?
- 📌 Decision on cash flow – Invest cash in project A or B

Top tip

If you have more than one, always put your most important questions or decisions first, especially if there is a constraint on time.

2. Make your meetings shorter

To prevent meetings from becoming less effective over time, keep them shorter and more focused.

Try out:

- 📌 15-minute meetings. Experimenting with shorter meeting times can prompt more productive discussions
- 📌 Stand-up meetings. Whether virtual or in-person standing meetings = shorter meetings
- 📌 Breaks between meetings. Breaks give our brains a chance to reset and re-energise for the next meeting.

Top tip

Choose one recurring meeting that you 'own'. Update the invite to make the meeting shorter and see if anyone asks to go back to the original format!

3. Don't default - decide

A meeting is often the 'easy' answer and we then default to a format we're familiar with. Before getting started press pause and

Decide:

- 📌 Does it need to be a meeting? (could it be a video or email using tech like [Vidyard](#)?)
- 📌 Who do we need to involve? Consult wide, meet small.
- 📌 How long does it need to be?
- 📌 How will I make sure everyone gets the chance to contribute?
- 📌 How will we know if this meeting is useful?

Top tip

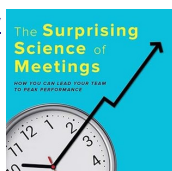
Rotate responsibility for meetings, allowing everyone to feel involved and included.

Recommended resources



With Copilot, Every Meeting Is a 'Digital Artifact'

Article by Microsoft



The Surprising Science of Meetings: How You Can Lead your Team to Peak Performance

Steven G. Rogelberg



Helen and Sarah share helpful tools to help you master your meetings on episode [#101](#) of Squiggly Careers.