

Are meetings bogging you down?

It's no secret that most people hate meetings. They find them to be tedious, unproductive and a waste of time. However, what most people don't realize is that meetings are not inherently bad. We have simply come to accept this is an inevitable truth, and so we get what we expect.

So the big question becomes, "How do we make these things better?" The best way to go about this is to understand the two reasons why meetings usually don't work. **First**, too many meetings are boring. **Second**, too many meetings are ineffective. In spite of the hours we spend in them, we get little closure, resolution or clarity in the end. Keeping in mind that we're trying to solve both of these problems, here are five tips for changing the way we see and manage meetings.

1. **Know the purpose of your meeting.** Is it about solving a tactical, short-term problem, or a critical, strategic issue? Are participants meant to brainstorm, debate, offer alternatives, or just sit and listen? Don't let your meeting devolve into a combination of all of these, leaving people confused about what is going on and what is expected of them.
2. **Clarify what is at stake.** Do participants understand the price of having a bad meeting? Do they know what could go wrong if bad decisions are made? If not, why should they care?
3. **Hook them from the outset.** Have you thought about the first 10 minutes of your meeting and how you're going to get people engaged? If you don't tee up your topic and dramatize why it matters, you might as well invite participants to check-out.
4. **Set aside enough time.** Are you going to be tempted to end the meeting before resolution has been achieved? Contrary to popular wisdom, the mark of a great meeting is not how short it is, or whether it ends on time. The key is whether it ends with clarity and commitment from participants.
5. **Provoke conflict.** Are your people uncomfortable during meetings and tired at the end? If not, they're probably not mixing it up enough and getting to the bottom of important issues. Conflict shouldn't be personal, but it should be ideologically emotional. Seek out opposing views and ensure that they are completely aired. Written by Patrick Lencioni

For more help with meetings contact:
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