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eBook

MEETINGS *that drive*
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A practical resource for running more productive and effective meetings with integrated meetings.

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In this eBook, you'll learn **how to run meetings the right way**.

We're going to walk you through our methodology of **Integrated Meetings**, which we've developed after 15+ years of business consulting experience working with thousands of clients around the world.
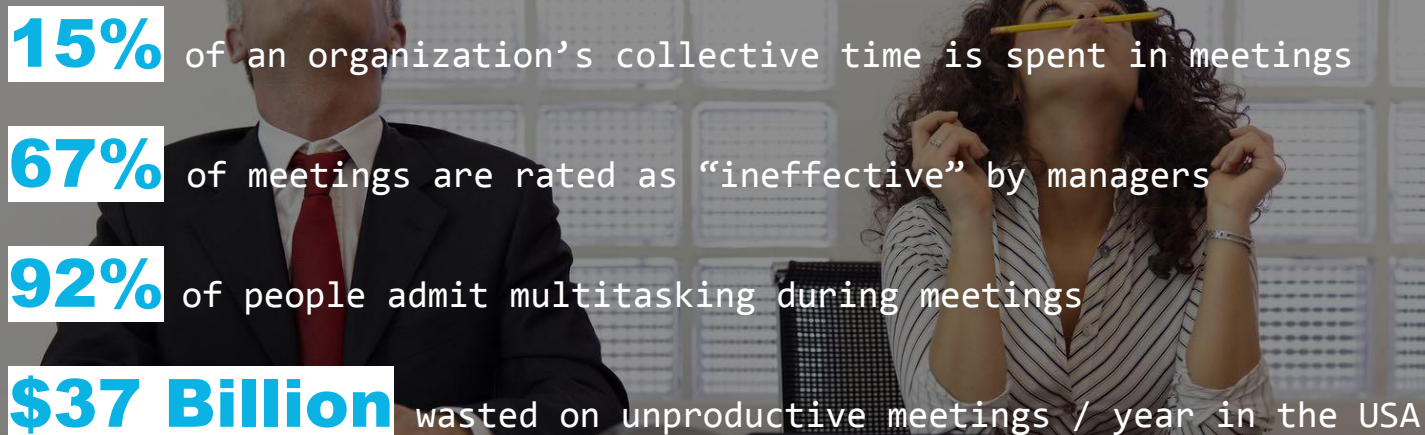
If someone asked you how you spent your time last week, would you honestly know how to answer? Most people would have to refer back to their meeting calendar or email inbox before giving an accurate answer.

In business, your team's time should be hyper-focused on your Strategic Priorities. The reality is most companies lose focus and people start "chasing squirrels": spreading their energy over many less important tasks instead of focusing on their strategic projects. Meetings are where you can nip that in the bud.

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Our research was unanimous: when asked what people consider their biggest time suck, the answer was meetings. Consider these stats from the Harvard Business Review, 2014, "Your Scarcest Resource:"

15% of an organization's collective time is spent in meetings

67% of meetings are rated as "ineffective" by managers

92% of people admit multitasking during meetings

$37 Billion wasted on unproductive meetings / year in the USA

This may surprise you, but we believe meetings can be the most productive and effective time you spend in business (if done right).

Meetings get a bad rap. People hate them. They think that meetings are gigantic wastes of time. In 2011, Harris Interactive surveyed more than 2,000 workers about status meetings, and **70 percent said that status meetings don't help them accomplish their work.**

A Microsoft survey tracking office productivity contacted 38,000 workers around the world to identify "productivity pitfalls." **Respondents reported that two out of every five days on the job were wasted. The main culprit: "ineffective meetings."**

It doesn't have to be that way. If you want to become a great company, you have to hold productive meetings.

One of our favourite observers of life in corporate America is Scott Adams' comic-strip character, Dilbert. He is the voice of all the people who contact Adams to tell him about their work and frustration. Over the years, Adams has devoted dozens of cartoons to the subject of meetings. As he notes, many attempts to "fix" meetings are misguided. Here's a quote from the cartoon for November 23, 2008:

"It's not a meeting until someone's time gets wasted."
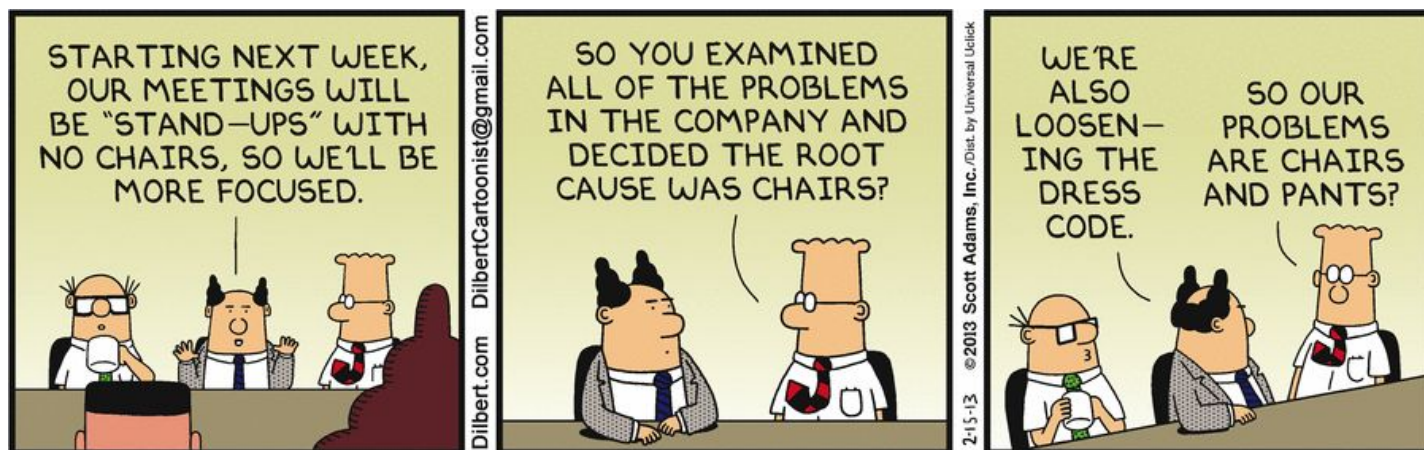
Wasting time is bad enough, but some meetings also miss opportunities. Dr. Jesse Lyn Stoner helps teams improve their performance. She often observes teams at work so she can understand what issues they need to work on. That means that she attends a lot of boring meetings. On her fiftieth birthday, she found herself in what she says was the most boring meeting of her life. Here is the way she describes it:

"I was observing a four-hour team meeting of the company's president and his eight direct reports. Sitting around a table, one at a time, each person reported what was happening in his or her area. The president asked questions. The others listened until it was their turn. There was no real discussion."

The purpose of the meeting appeared to be updating the president, but that could have been done in a number of different ways.

Stoner points out that **the company missed an opportunity to tap into the collective wisdom and experience of the senior executives.**

The 5 Ps of productive meetings

The 5 Ps of productive meetings

The fact is, people hate meetings because so many meetings are worth hating. Too many are boring and unnecessary. It doesn't have to be that way. But the answer isn't to eliminate meetings; it's to make your meetings better.

Meetings can help you be more productive, not less. They can actually save you time instead of wasting it. Those constructive meetings follow the: **"5 Ps of Productive Meetings"**

PURPOSE	Every productive meeting has a **purpose.** Participants should know what the meeting is for. The purpose should be worth pulling people away from other productive work. It should be something that can be best accomplished by a group of people working together at the same time.
PREPARATION	**Preparation** is one key to productive meetings. Every attendee should come prepared with the right data and be ready to share their perspectives in order to achieve the purpose.
PROCESS	Productive meetings have a clear **process,** defined by the agenda. It should describe how participants will accomplish the purpose. Recurring meetings, in particular, should always have a standard agenda.
PARTICIPATION	Productive meetings are characterized by the **participation** of everyone present. People should be at the meeting because they have something to contribute, and participating is how they contribute.
PROGRESS	In a productive meeting, everyone should make **progress.** They should leave the meeting better off than when they entered and have more clarity around what everyone needs to do next.

The guidelines (above) should hold for any meeting you call. But there are three specific meetings that you can use to drive execution and productivity. They are the Weekly Team Meeting, the Daily Team Huddle, and the One-on-One Weekly Meeting. We'll go over each one of these next.

the weekly
team meeting

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When Alan Mulally took over at Ford, the company was losing money at the rate of $83 million a day. He immediately changed the way his team of corporate-level executives worked together, as Professor Nancy Koehn describes:

"He eliminated all corporate-level meetings except for two he introduced: the weekly, mandatory business plan review, when the senior team reported its progress on specific goals, and the special-attention review, when executives took up issues needing in-depth consideration."

Professor Koehn described the meetings as: **"the highway on which Ford's leaders drove change."** The weekly business plan review meetings were Ford's equivalent of what I call Weekly Team Meetings. Reviewing performance weekly keeps things on track and sets a fast but manageable cadence for the team.

Using the RESULTS.com Integrated Meetings Software, the Weekly Team meeting is all about peer accountability. Team members are accountable to each other for their performance and for supporting each other.

## Here are 5 ways to improve your team meetings right now:

1. Before the meeting, everyone needs to prepare so they arrive ready to help make the time productive. Every person should review his or her performance, especially KPIs and Strategic Projects and pre-populate the meeting with their update.

2. Update the status in your software dashboard of everything you're accountable for. Try drafting a Twitter-length status update for each item to explain what is happening and what you are doing about it.

3. Prior to the meeting, everyone should also have clearly documented the next steps, or key tasks that need to happen next to move each of their Strategic Projects and KPIs forward.

4. I suggest that you hold your Weekly Team Meeting at the same time every week. That helps avoid scheduling conflicts while it establishes a steady cadence for the team. You should use the same agenda at every Weekly Team Meeting.

5. Standardized agendas for routine meetings are powerful. They make it easier for people to prepare. Team members can build meeting preparation into their work rhythm.

Here's our recommended agenda for a regular, one-to-two hour Weekly Team Meeting:

- Good News Story

  (both business and personal)
- Notes Review
- Team Goal Review

  (Key Performance Indicators & Projects)
- Top Priority
- Parking Lot Discussion
- Core Value Story Nominations
- Team "1-Phrase" Close (Optional)
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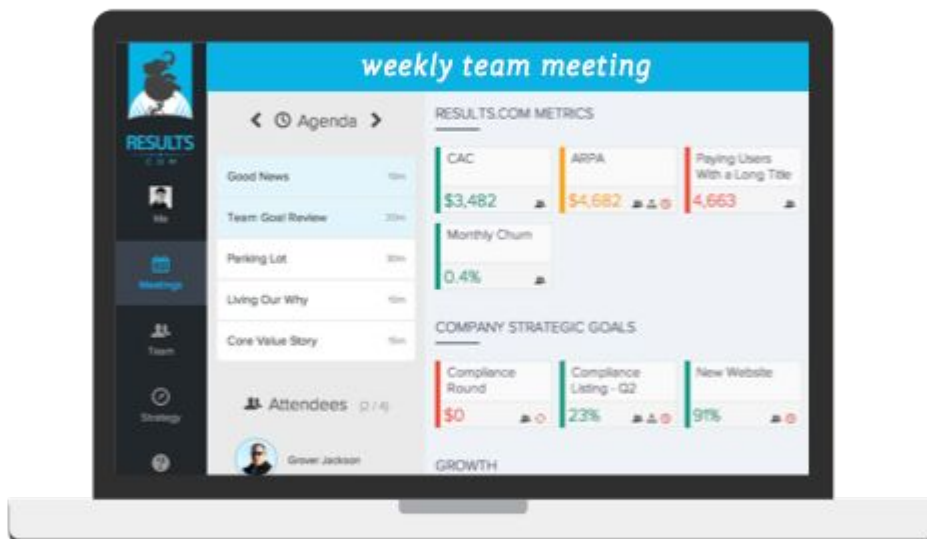
In the next few pages, I'll provide additional detail per agenda item (listed above).

Good News Story	**Start on a positive note by sharing good news.** Have every team member share a personal good news story and a business good news story. In addition to setting the tone, personal good news stories help team members learn about each other. Team members should use a key accomplishment from last week as their business good news story. Allow and enforce a one-minute-per-person limit, using the Twitter rule.
Notes Review	**Review last week's top priorities.** Have every team member verbally state whether they completed their top priority or not. Use the comments feature to update the team if you struggled to complete the priority due to a blockage outside of your control. Or add good news describing how you nailed it!

Team Goal Review	**Review last week's Top Priorities.** Have every team member verbally state whether they completed their Top Priority or not. Use the Comments feature to update the Team if you struggled to complete due to a blockage outside of your control. Or some good news as to how you nailed it.
Top Priority	**What's your top priority in the week ahead?** What are you going to commit to getting done above and beyond business as usual? Pre-populate this as a task and review the following week in the notes review agenda item.
Parking Lot	The **Parking Lot** is the place on the agenda for items that don't fall under either KPI or Strategic Project performance review. These should be things that benefit from harnessing the collective brainpower of the team.

The importance of the parking lot:

There may be roadblocks or challenges that are preventing a person or the team from achieving their goals. There may be an "elephant in the room" that you all know is there but that's not being discussed, that needs to be dealt with. Or there may be a key decision that requires input and debate by the team. This is where the Parking Lots comes in.

**Here are a couple of other guidelines:**

Set a time limit for discussing all the Parking Lot issues and hold to it, even if you only discuss one item on the list. When that happens, you don't want the other issues to either roll over to the next meeting or simply stay unresolved. Always either resolve an issue or assign a task to someone to take a specific action that will start the resolution process for items that you did not have time to discuss on the day.

This is the part of the meeting where you're most likely to have disagreement and heated discussion. That's OK if the conflict you have is productive conflict.

You should have some disagreements. If there is no disagreement, the chances are that you've got a dysfunctional team. Disagreement, even argument, is fine if people are constructively and passionately debating the issues and concentrating on those issues, while respecting each other.

We need to make it safe for people to disagree with one another. Make it safe for people to disagree with the leader as well. Your goal is to make the very best decisions in the best interests of the company.
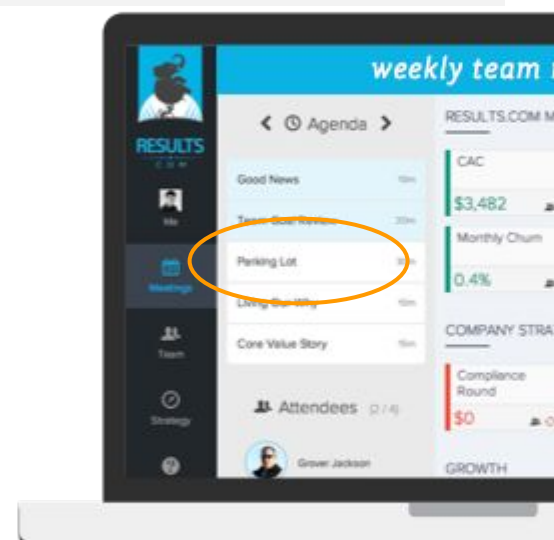
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Core Value Story	Your **Core Values** are important because they are your guiding principles that dictate behaviour and action. Core Values serve as your business and team's moral compass, helping to guide their decision making process. Encourage all your team to pre-populate their Core Value Story by nominating someone else in the company (never yourself), and the Core Value that you saw them live in the previous week. Don't be generic - be specific. What did they specifically do that demonstrated one of your core values. Core Values define your Company Culture.
One Phrase Close	Wrap up the Weekly Team Meeting with the **One Phrase Close**. Go around the room and have everyone share one short phrase that captures how they feel or what they're thinking at the moment. The One Phrase Close can serve as a quick temperature check on team morale. Some people will say something motivating and upbeat. But others may say something that gives you a clue that they're not as happy as they could be. Follow up with them later to see what's up.

How to implement a core value story:

Everyone is required to share a story of how someone else on the team has demonstrated one of your Core Values by their actions in the previous week. It's a great way to make the Core Values clear and also praise people who've demonstrated them in their work. I suggest the following format:

>> *I nominate John for "Going the Extra Mile": John stayed back late on Friday to get the goods shipped on the last courier and followed up with the client at 8am on Monday to communicate and ensure the goods were delivered on time.*
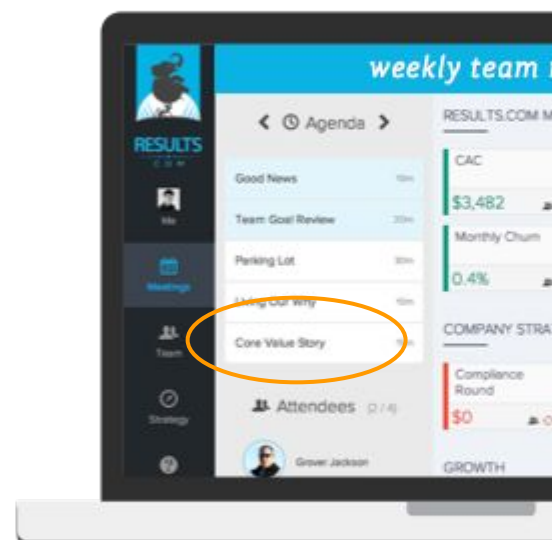
The Weekly Team Meeting is a powerful way to keep things on track and moving forward. But they only gain strength when you do them every week. Let me warn you that you will be tempted to skip a week because there's too much work or there's a fire that needs fighting.

Don't give in to that temptation. Here's the experience of a friend of mine, who owned and ran a small publishing company, in his own words:

"Part of our operating ritual was the Monday morning all-hands meeting. In about an hour and a half, we reviewed performance and what we needed to do in the coming week. My team knew that I was a fanatic about the meeting because I felt that it kept us productive and on track.

When I was on an extended trip to South America, my team decided that they were just too busy to hold the regular meeting. In fact, they skipped the meeting two weeks in a row. Nobody told me that.

When we held the first meeting after I got back, it was clear that things had gone off the rails. Key performance measures hadn't been met. Projects were behind.

That was odd, because my team always did well when I was gone before. It took a minute or two before one team member told me what they'd done. I turned that into a lesson for them about the importance of that weekly meeting, but it was a lesson for me, too. When you review every week, you catch problems when they're small, and it's easy to get back on track. Every week you miss, the problems get bigger, and getting back on track takes more effort."

team huddles

Team huddles

If you really want to accelerate the progress of your business, RESULTS.com often suggests that you meet every day. Obviously, you don't want a long meeting because you want to keep energy high and get people back to productive work, but you also want to assure that the work of your team is concentrated and coordinated.

That's why people in several different industries seem to have simultaneously started holding short meetings at the start of every day or every shift. The meetings fall under various names and methodologies including "stand-up meeting," "scrum", and more. We prefer the term "team huddles."

These meetings vary a lot in the issues they address and the specifics of their agendas, but they all have **five important things in common:**

1. They are held at the same time and with the same agenda every workday or every shift.
2. They are held at the beginning of the day or shift.
3. Everyone in the work group or team is expected to attend (or call in if they can't attend in person).
4. Everyone stands during the meeting.
5. The meetings are very short - 10-15 minutes at most.

Have everyone answer the following four questions – first, each person answers the first question, then they all answer the second question, and so on.

- What are you working on today?
- What is your number-one priority to get done before you leave work today?
- Any roadblocks?
- One Phrase Close: that's anything a team member wants to say.

Again, the whole meeting should take no more than ten minutes. That's long enough to cover the important things and coordinate team effort. It also helps you make sure all your people are focused on their most important priority and helps the team understand what is going on with other team members.

The secret here is discipline. If you keep these structured, you'll boost productivity. If you let the flow free, you're wasting time.

At most large companies, "performance management" or "performance reviews" involves two things: reviewing a job description that usually includes some hiring requirements, and an annual or semi-annual performance appraisal. There are way too many problems with this "standard protocol:"

- There is no immediate feedback to help improve unsatisfactory performance (when it happens)
- Positive feedback is delayed when performance goals are met, which can cause disengagement

But there are better ways to manage performance. If you use the RESULTS.com software, the window into performance is constant and feedback can be made immediately and in context with what is or isn't happening.

The RESULTS.com methodology you've been learning in this eBook helps people stay on track and succeed. It helps everyone get very clear on what needs focus and on how performance will be measured.

That methodology includes the Weekly 1:1 Meetings. Very few companies do anything like this, but it's critical to individual and team success. It's the team leader's opportunity to review individual performance with the same discipline and rigor as team performance.

1:1 Meeting Best Practices:

- Meet with every one of your direct reports, one-on-one, every week.
- Choose a location where you will not be disturbed.
- Don't allow distractions from your phone or computer.
- Your meeting should take no more than a half-hour.
- Block out this time in your calendar and make sure you keep these appointments every week.
- **As a manager, your number-one task is supporting your people.**

Establish an agenda and time limit, and stick to them. Keep the meeting brief and focused. Here's an agenda that works best:

- Good News
- Notes Review
- Individual Goal Review

Encourage your people to prepare for the 1-1 by pre-populating anything on the list below by using the Comments and Questions feature within the Meeting.

That way you both turn up to the meeting and as a Manager you can get straight into coaching and supporting your people to tackle the roadblocks or challenges that have been brought up. Use the Decision feature to come to a mutual outcome and document it. If an action needs to be taken, use the Task feature to ensure completion.

- KPI Review
- Action Items
- Roadblock Support
- What's Up

- Observations
- Follow Up
- One Phrase Close

Set-Up	**Prepare.** You and your team member should show up with the updated information you need to discuss the current reality.
KPI Review	**Review performance.** Briefly discuss each project the individual is accountable for and get a status update. Briefly discuss each Key Performance Indicator and Strategic Project the worker is responsible for and get a status update.
Action Items	**Agree on what will be done.** Ask the person what tangible action he or she will take this week (and next) to move each goal forward or address any issues you have identified. Agree on the actions to be taken and capture these tasks in writing, including specific details and due dates.
Roadblock Support	**Take away excuses**. Ask what support or resources they need from you to help them succeed. As a manager, you need to provide the resources and clear the obstacles from their paths so that the most important tasks get done. You also need to keep out of their way and not overwhelm them with too many demands or conflicting priorities. Shield them from distractions to create the time and space for the most important tasks every week.
What's Up?	**Ask if there are any other issues that they would like to raise.** How are they feeling? Are there any minor grievances that are bugging them? What's going on in their lives right now? Take a sincere interest in them and their lives outside of work.
Observations	**Share any issues or feelings you think are important.** Performance reviews are not an annual event. Let your people know every week how they are performing, both in terms of the performance data and what you have personally observed. Let them know that you are on their side. Demonstrate your commitment to helping them succeed.
Good News	**Finish on a high note**. Find something they are doing well and acknowledge it. Praise is most effective if you commend the specific behaviors you want to see reinforced. You're not done yet. The purpose of this meeting is to improve performance, so there's one more important step.
Follow Up	**Follow up to make sure each task gets checked off as done.** You get what you inspect. Holding people firmly accountable for honoring their commitments is crucial if you want to create a high-performance culture. This is not micro-managing. Give the person the freedom and autonomy to go away and determine how best to achieve each task, but follow up to close the loop and make sure it got done.

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- Results don't happen all of a sudden at the end of a month or a quarter or a year. You are moving toward your BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) and other goals every day and every week.

- The meetings described in this eBook help you make sure that all your team's efforts are concentrated on important work and coordinated to get the best results.

- These meetings help you spot problems and opportunities early. They're also the final piece in the system. They're the point where all that analysis and all those decisions connect with daily activity.

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Thank you for reading.

I hope this eBook helps you run better meetings and grow your company.

Best of luck moving forward. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Results Coaching Team on csmteam@results.com

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