

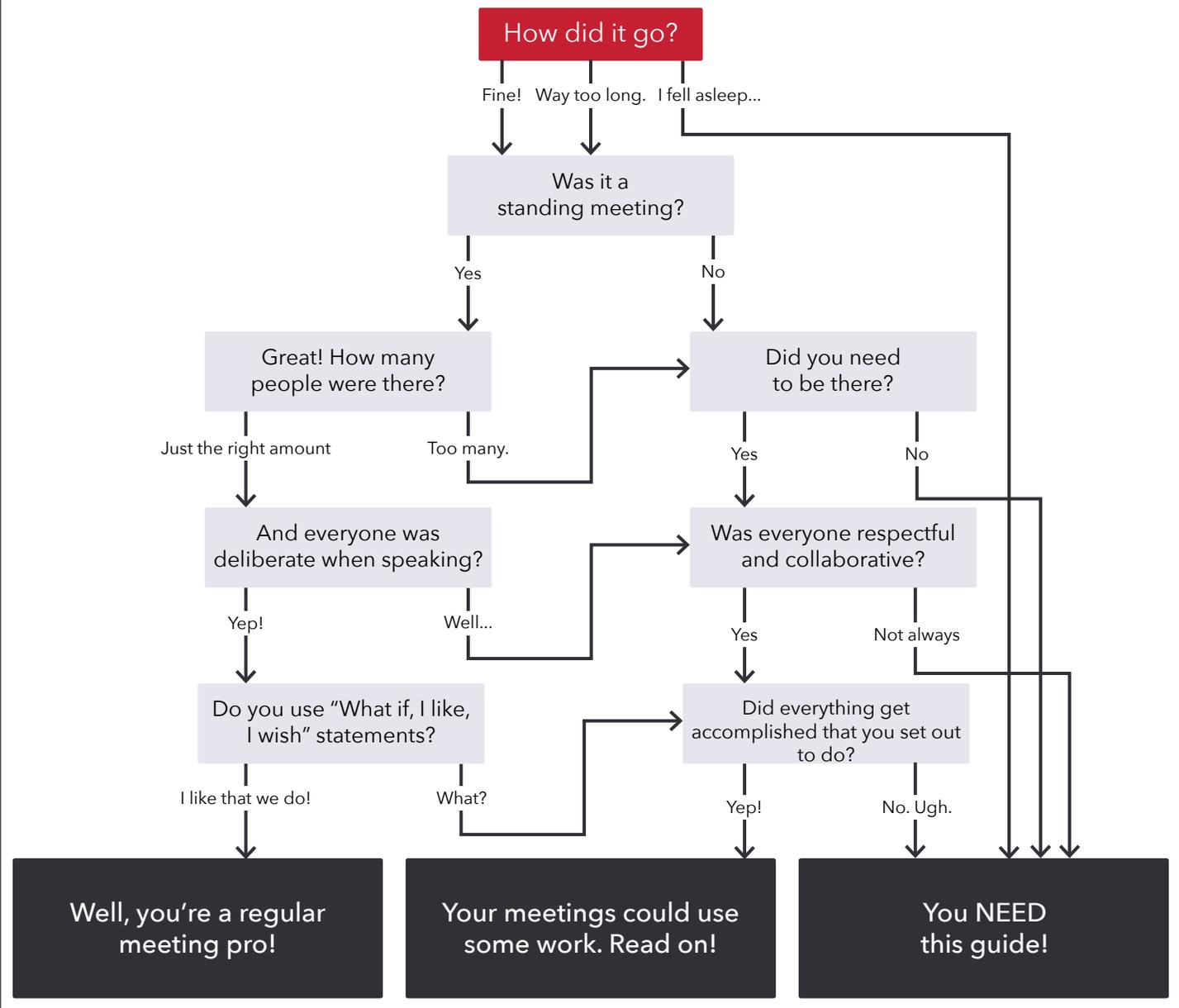


5 Ways to Make  
Your Meetings  
More Productive

# MAKE MEETINGS MATTER

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# Take a step back and consider your last meeting...



We spend a lot of time in meetings. In fact, the average employee attends a staggering 62 meetings each month. Sadly, not all of these meetings are the productive collaboration sessions that we hope for.

According to Atlassian, over half of the time we spend in meetings, is considered wasted. But it doesn't have to be that way! With a few intentional changes, you can design your meetings to be more productive, more collaborative, and more meaningful.

This E-guide will show you how to:

- ☑ Optimize your meeting space for collaboration
- ☑ Choose the right people to meet
- ☑ Narrow your meeting focus
- ☑ Communicate with honesty and positivity
- ☑ Turn your meeting ideas into action

Whether you are a small startup company or an established institution, re-thinking the way you meet can empower your team to work together more effectively.

# STEP ONE: Start with the Space

It's easy to underestimate the way in which your space can influence your meeting- but don't! The right meeting space can boost your team's creativity and spark comfortable communication.

Scott Doorley and Scott Witthoft, authors of *Make Space- How to Set the Stage for Creative Collaboration* note that good collaboration spaces:

1. *Are reconfigurable*
2. *Are comfortable- evoking more "home" and less "office"*
3. *Supports acoustic privacy*
4. *Offers different lighting options.*

Make sure your meeting space has these collaboration essentials:

- Post-it notes
- White boards and markers
- Snacks
- Natural lighting
- Warm colors to evoke a relaxed vibe
- Creative objects that elicit conversation
- Wi-Fi

**"Space is the 'body language' of an organization."**

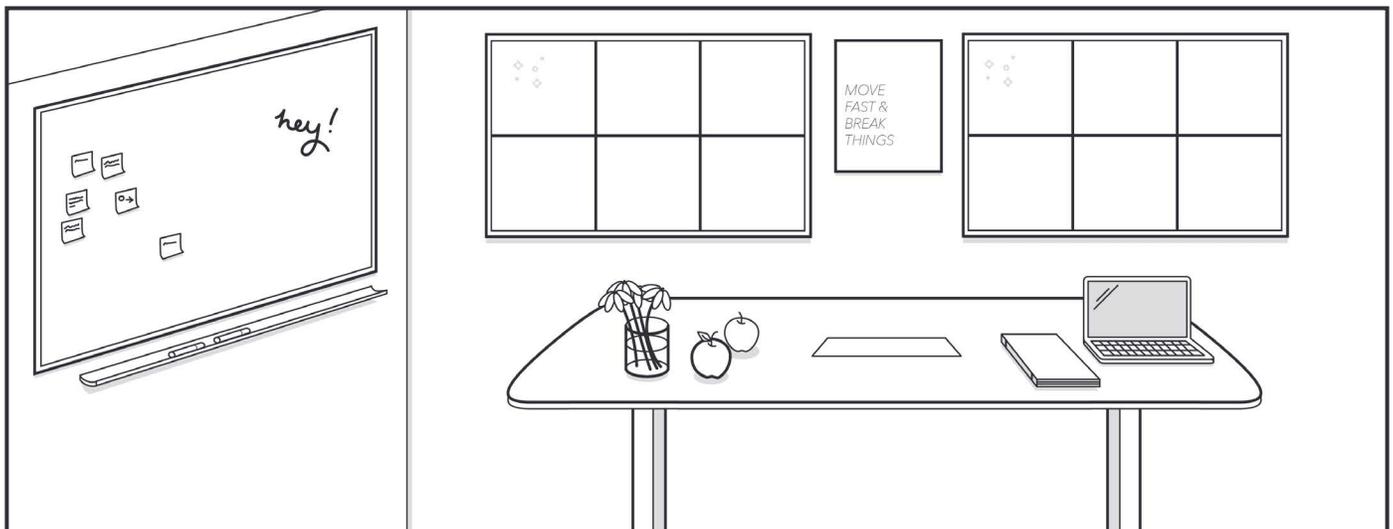
- Chris Flink, d.School and Ideo



QUICK  
TIP →

**MAKE IT AN  
UPRIGHT MEETING!**

One easy way to upgrade your space is to remove all of the chairs. That may sound brash, but in reality, it will allow you to be more agile in your thinking. Seth Godin- marketing extraordinaire- is a vocal proponent for a chair-free conference room, stating "I think most of the time, most meetings should be held without chairs. People standing up think more quickly and get distracted less often. And the meetings don't last as long."

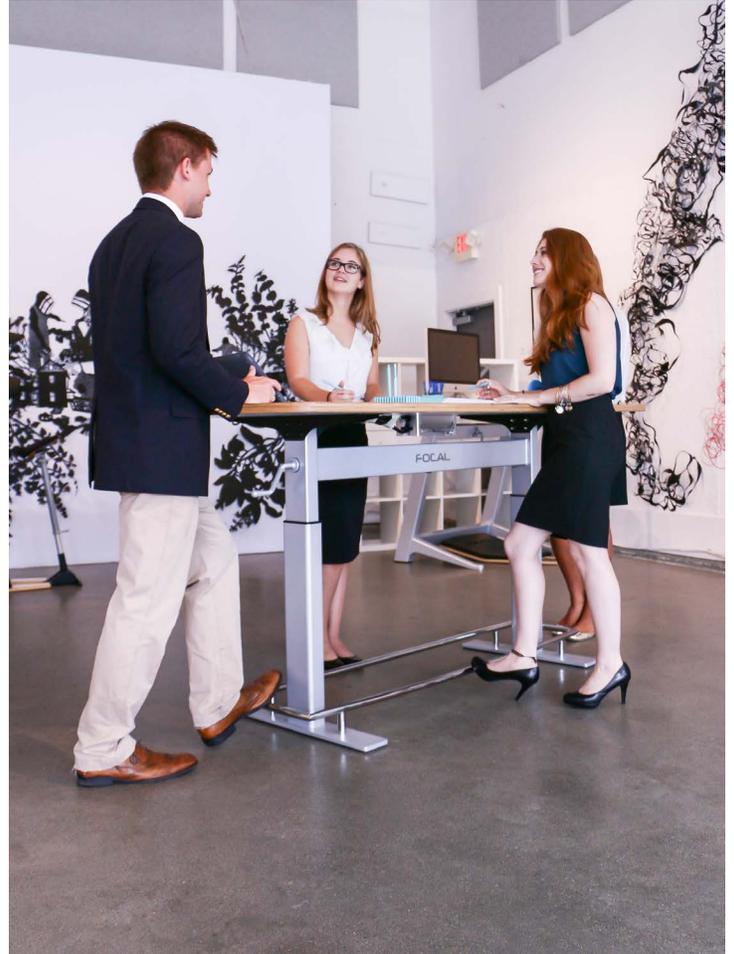


# STEP TWO: Think Small

Before you invite everyone on the team to your meeting, pause and think about who really needs to be there in order to accomplish the task at hand. Limiting the number of people required to attend allows for more flexibility in scheduling and can drastically improve communication. Think of each and every attendee as an active participant- not a spectator.

Answer these quick questions before pressing send on that calendar invite. If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, then send away! If not, shoot that person an email instead with a summary.

1. Does this person have expertise that can help accomplish the task at hand?
2. Does this person have decision-making power as it relates to the task at hand?
3. Does the outcome of this meeting directly impact this person?



**"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."**

- Phil Jackson



## ADOPTING THE TWO-PIZZA POLICY

Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, operates on the belief that the more people there are, the less productive most meetings will be. To prevent meetings from getting too large, Bezos has implemented the two pizza rule at Amazon, which states that you should never have a meeting where two pizzas couldn't feed the entire group.

# STEP THREE: Meet With Purpose

Before your meeting begins, it's important to set a clear purpose. Let all meeting-goers know exactly what you are trying to accomplish with this meeting.

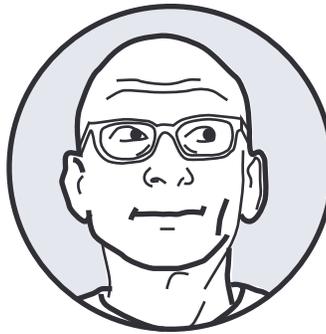
According to Business Insider, there are 3 key types of meetings informative, collaborative, and decisive.

**Informative** - these meetings are strictly to share information; to give status updates on products, services, finances or people so that others can make more informed decisions.

**Collaborative** - this is when a particular topic or idea requires further exploration, or when a decision has been made and it's now time to strategize.

## QUICK TIP →

Send a meeting agenda at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting. If preparation is required (and we highly suggest that it should be!), let meeting-goers know that. This will lead to more active participation and will cut down on wasted time.

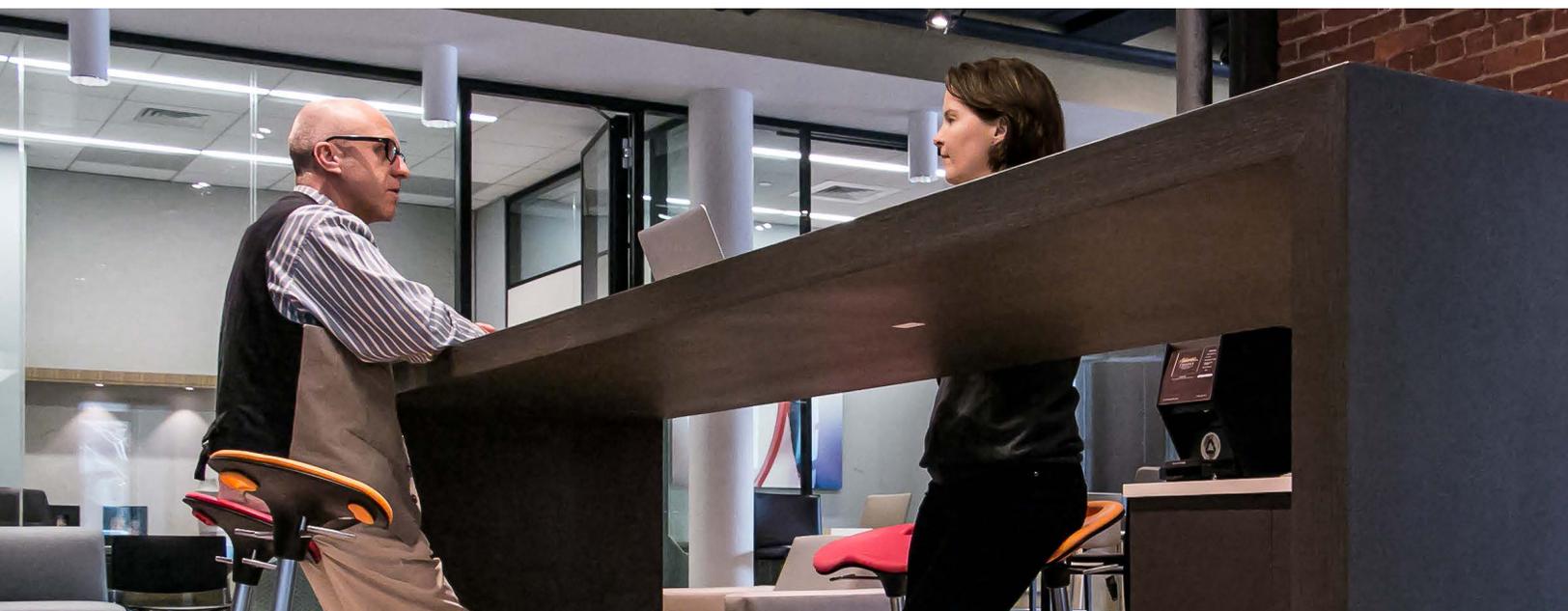


**"Confused meeting types are the number one source of meeting ennui."**

- Seth Godin

**Decisive** - sharing information is great—necessary—but without a decision, analytics and data are useless. Decisive meetings normally occur around a milestone or objective to reach.

Know what type of meeting you are having and communicate that to your team ahead of time.



# STEP FOUR: Communicate like a Comedian

Real collaboration is predicated on real communication. If you are looking to boost your team's communication competency, look to the example of improv comedians.

Improv comedians are masters of collaboration. When putting together a sketch, they have to listen to their teammates' statements, accept them, and add to them, all while maintaining composure.

Adopt these principles to improve your team's communication and potentially get a few laughs while you're at it.

## 1. BUILD OFF EACH OTHER

Improv comedians have a time-honored tradition of saying "yes, and." This means that when one team member makes a statement, the next team member affirms it by saying "yes" and then adds to it by saying "and". This ensures that team members are not shutting ideas down, but instead building upon each other to create something better.

## 2. THINK OUT OF THE BOX

In improv comedy, no idea is considered too out there. Quite the contrary, the boldest ideas are often bring about the biggest laughs. The same can hold true in the meeting room. Unfortunately, inhibition often prevents meeting goers from sharing their ideas. Encourage meeting goers to freely share their ideas without fear of judgement.

## 3. LISTEN UP

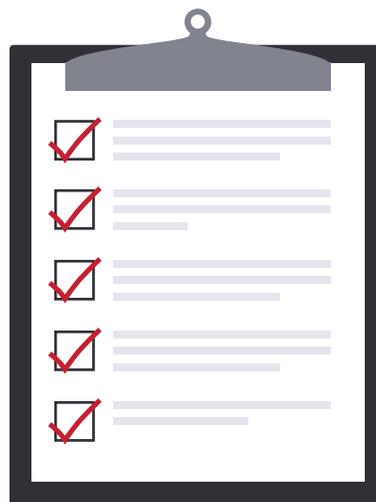
For improv to work, team members must stay in the present moment and actively listen to each other. Meeting goers should do the same- paying acute attention not only to what their colleagues say but also to what they mean before reacting.

# STEP FIVE: Wrap it up Right

Before you end your meetings make sure you recap any immediate actions and assign them to the appropriate owners. The worst thing that can happen is nobody follows up and then you have another meeting to talk about what you already discussed.

## QUICK TIP →

The organizer of the meeting should send a short email summary, with action items, to every attendee within ten minutes of the end of the meeting.





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