

# OWN YOUR MEETINGS— HERE'S HOW



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# OWN YOUR MEETINGS

There are few things people greet with less enthusiasm than scheduling and attending meetings. They're at the center of almost everything we do as a business, yet somewhere along the way, something went terribly wrong to tarnish their reputation. Why is it that so many of us hate meetings so badly?

The average person works 90,000 hours over their career and is scheduled for nearly 60 meetings every month. With

1 out of 3 minutes of every workday spent in meetings, you can see why resentment builds. It's easy to blame bad meetings—they can waste away our days, they can keep us late and they tend to pop up right when we're in the middle of a project.

But the truth is, meetings are absolutely vital to a functioning company. From the smallest startup working out of the owner's garage to the largest Fortune 100

companies, we all rely on meetings to collaborate on new ideas and make more informed decisions. Taking the steps to own your meetings will go a long way toward hosting the meetings your team will actually love and establishing a productive meeting culture in your organization. So fire up Outlook, or whatever email service you use, and let's schedule a meeting. Or should we?





# TO MEET OR NOT TO MEET

The first step in effectively owning your meetings is to know when to meet. And you're already pretty good at it. For instance, you knew to email the friend who shared this guide with you instead of booking a flight to thank them in person because some communication exchanges are best suited for a text or an email or a phone call.

To determine when and how to meet, start with this question:



Download the "To Meet Or Not To Meet" chart for use in your office.





# PLAN INTELLIGENTLY

Before you reserve a room and send out your meeting invites, consider the outcomes you're expecting from the meeting. Effective meetings are the product of good leadership, and good leaders come to the meeting knowing exactly what they need to discuss—and discuss only that.

meeting structure and sets the tone for the discussion. It also gives others time to prepare their contributions and keeps the conversation on track and relevant. An agenda can be as simple as a list of topics and as complex as a full, down-to-the-minute time line.

Create an agenda and send it out with your meeting request. The agenda gives the



73% of people view having an agenda as a critical element to their meeting productivity.

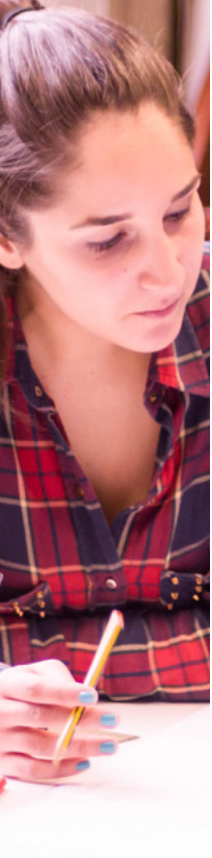


But only 63% of meetings actually include them. Plan intelligently and own the agenda.

# CONSIDER THE ATTENDEES

It might sound simple, but invite only the people who will add to the discussion and contribute to the meeting goals. The purpose of most meetings is multiway communication and collaboration, not dissemination of information. Have a plan for distributing the “meeting wrap-up” or “meeting minutes” to the groups of people who would benefit from the information, but don’t feel pressured to invite everyone to every meeting.

*Meetings can easily spiral out of control when too many unnecessary guests are included. Help save the estimated 25–50% of time considered wasted by meeting attendees who don’t need to be in your meetings and own the attendee list.*





# EMBRACE THE TECHNOLOGY

How we communicate in the business world is changing. The rise of the remote worker continues to spread out the workforce. Access to Wi-Fi makes it easy to work from practically anywhere. People are bringing and working on the devices that they want to use, and boardrooms and conference rooms are being replaced with smaller, more agile huddle room meeting spaces.

Video conferencing makes it easy to get the right people in your meetings, regardless of their locations or devices, and still lets you communicate and collaborate in real time and face to face. It's easy to embrace the technology when it works the way you do.

Don't currently own the technology but are thinking about it? Consider this:

#### **Compatibility**

Look for a video conferencing solution that is standards based and is available on the devices and browsers you use every day.

#### **Quality of Experience**

For video conferencing to be successful, it needs to be so good that the users forget they're using it.

#### **Security**

These are your confidential meetings we're talking about. Make sure everything is encrypted.

#### **Ease of Use**

If it isn't easy to use, it won't be used. Find a solution that works the way you do and naturally fits in with your workflow.

Check out these additional resources to learn more about the changes in business communications.

- The Remote Worker Revolution
- Ten Surprising Facts About Our Mobile World
- Five Must-haves for Any Great Huddle Room





# REMEMBER YOUR VIDEO ETIQUETTE

Sit up straight. Don't talk with your mouth full. The fork and knife positioned closest to the plate are for your main course. Most of the etiquette you already know translates perfectly to the video conferencing meeting. Set the tone and own the meeting experience.

## **Speak naturally**

You don't need to shout for the far end to hear you on a video conferencing call. Speak naturally and let the microphone do its job.

## **Mute your background noise**

If you run into any feedback or you're situated in a loud room, be sure to mute yourself when you aren't talking.

## **Dress appropriately**

Dress for your company culture. Video conferencing should just be a natural extension to the meeting.

## **Be yourself**

It's just a video call, after all.

## **Look at the camera**

When it's your turn to talk on a video call, look into the camera and let your body language help support what you're trying to say.







# CLOSE WITH AN ACTION PLAN

Save time at the end of the meeting to record action items and set accountability and time lines. Then say good-bye as you consciously end your meeting on time. Follow through with your meeting wrap-up to recap and clarify what was discussed, and don't forget to extend it to the people who would benefit from the information.

Own ending your meetings on time every time, and watch your meeting culture start to shift into something a lot more effective, enjoyable and productive.

*We hope that you have learned how to own your meetings. Good meeting habits help create the kind of meetings your team actually want to be a part of. Contact us to learn more about upgrading your meetings to an experience you'll love, and download a free trial of Lifesize Cloud to get started today.*

FREE TRIAL

BOOK A DEMO

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#### SOURCES

<https://e-meetings.verizonbusiness.com/global/en/meetingsinamerica/uswhitepaper.php>

<http://www.okstate.edu/ceat/msetm/courses/etm5221/Week%201%20Challenges/Meeting%20Analysis%20Findings%20from%20Research%20and%20Practice.pdf>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastianbailey/2013/08/08/just-say-no-how-your-meeting-habit-is-harming-you/>

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