

# How to Deal with Difficult People in Meetings

[Read the full blog post here](#)

## Types of People Who Can Disrupt a Meeting:

01

### People Who Argue

Although debate and controversy are usually healthy for organizations, some people push it; they argue miniscule points, don't see others' views, or don't understand the value of compromise. They may be angry, feel misunderstood, or enjoy challenging a leader. They often don't know how much they irritate others, and how they are perceived.

02

### People Who Dominate

People who dominate have similar traits; they may also be poor listeners, or talkative people, or they may have an agenda. They go on and on, to show-off or demonstrate superior knowledge or ability. They are unaware of the purpose – to generate many ideas, allow participation, build consensus. They are also unaware of the effect they have on others and sometimes may be rewarded for this behavior.

03

### People Who Have Side Meetings

People who are talking during the meeting may have an emergency, but often they are bored. This may be because you have spent too much time on the topic, or because they are self-important, rude and unaware of the effect of their behavior on others. You can't have an effective meeting when there are other meetings going on. How do you keep these types of people from disrupting your meetings? First, recognize the type of person you are dealing with. Then, think strategically. Try employing these techniques to get them to change their behaviors:

## So how do you deal with...



### People Who Argue

- **Prevent** by having a pre-meeting discussion
- **Intervene** by confronting the argument
- **Draw out objection** with question
- **Turn it over** to the group to judge
- **Point out** the negative impact
- Keep it **professional**, not **personal**

### People Who Dominate

- **Enforce** time limits and ground rules
- **Prevent** by pre-meeting discussion
- **Intervene** by asking questions of others
- **Avoid** recognizing the "dominator"
- Look for a place to **break-in**
- **Thank them** for their contribution
- **Ask** for other opinions



### People Who Have Side Meetings

- **Discuss** privately after meeting
- **Glance** in their direction
- If that fails, **walk near them**
- Or, **go quiet**, stop the meeting
- **Let them finish** their conversation
- **Ask** their opinion about topic
- **Sit next to them**

## How to Ensure Your Meetings Stay on Track:

### Promote positive conflict by:

- Create a safe, open environment where people can speak their minds
- Encourage all participants to speak up, and don't let anyone dominate

### Manage negative conflict by:

- Identify common goals between participants
- Build on agreements you already have as you try to resolve differences

[Click here](#) for more tips on dealing with conflict

