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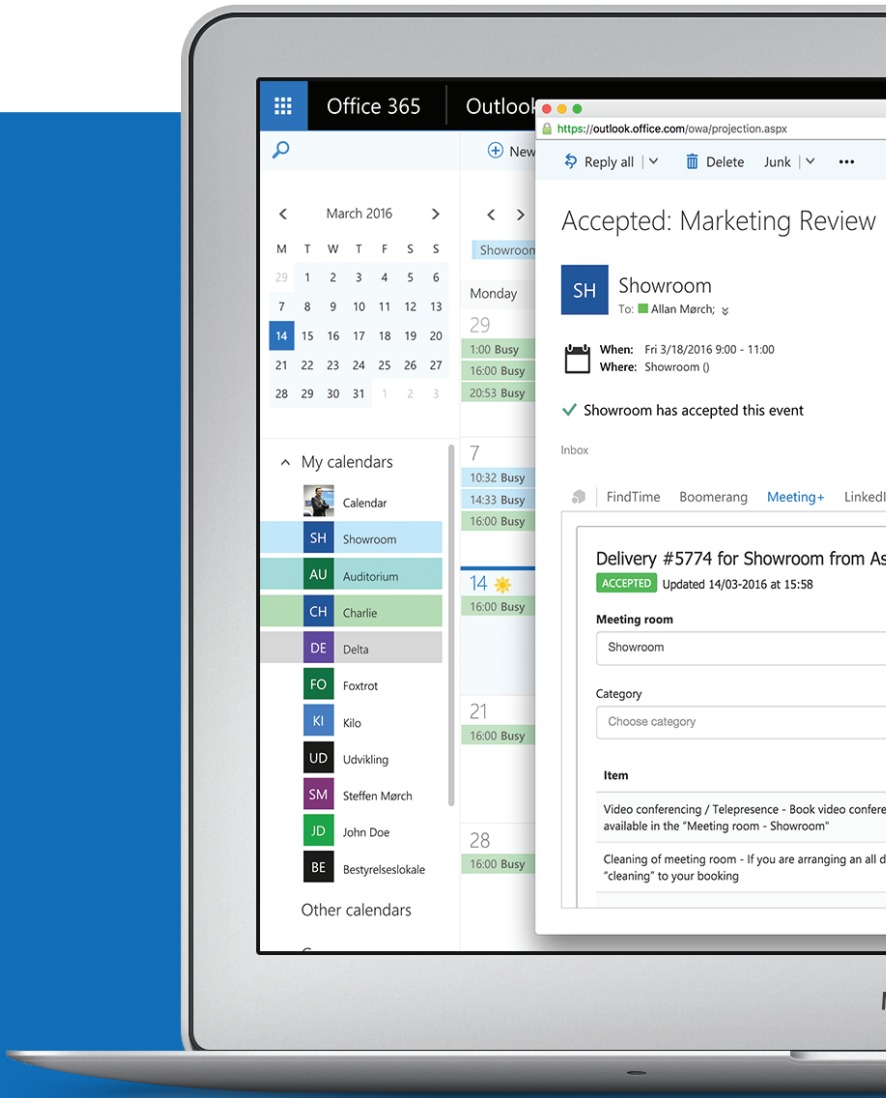
eBook

Meeting Management: How Much Time Do you Waste?



Statistics show that 40 percent of workers in large organizations waste up to 30 minutes a day searching for space to collaborate. Learn why a one-hour meeting is never just a one-hour meeting and get three easy steps to optimize time spent on meetings in your organization.

Have you ever:

- Had trouble finding a meeting room that accommodated your specific criteria?
- Experienced poor utilization of your workspaces and meeting rooms?
- Felt you or your organization spent more time on planning and preparing for meetings than attending them?

Then read on to learn what could be the single biggest boost to productivity for your organization.

Meeting Management

In every office, there's a secret meeting room battle waging

There's good reason professionals spend so much of their time attending meetings every week. You meet to share ideas, make progress, gain results, move forward, collaborate, learn, improve, and grow. Meetings are a necessary part of business life.

But what isn't necessary is the amount of time employees spend on tedious tasks or bogged down in complicated systems to arrange them.

Stop and consider how much time you spend planning a single meeting. You need a room with a whiteboard and a presentation screen, and you'd like to provide beverages for your meeting guests.

The process of booking a meeting room can often be seen as an exercise in futility -- just ask your office administrator. This is further complicated for organizations with a constantly rotating menu of meetings to manage over an array of conference rooms across multiple locations and time zones. Office professionals report that there are few tasks more tedious or time consuming than meeting management.

In fact, research shows that 40 percent of workers in large organizations waste 30 minutes a day searching for space to collaborate. These professionals spend an average of 4.75 hours arranging 15 meetings every week.

Why is meeting management such a problem?

People forget to look at the calendar. They see that a room is empty and assume it is free. But another group has booked it. When they arrive, it's impossible to work out who booked the room first without interrupting the meeting that is currently taking place.

These types of interruptions kill productivity and waste time. But without a clear overview of the day's meetings available to all employees, they are common occurrences. And without a meeting room booking tool that is integrated into your company's existing infrastructure, such as Microsoft Exchange or Office 365, time is spent on cumbersome processes that require switching between third-party applications.

A flexible workplace environment with the right management tools is key to future success. Tools that help book and manage hot desks, huddle rooms, meeting pods, or conference rooms effectively and offer a real-time comprehensive overview could save thousands of dollars per day, enhance productivity, and harmonize the needs of companies and individuals alike.

The activity-based workplace model flips the traditional office model on its head. Modern open spaces have transformed into quiet work zones while smaller, enclosed spaces are now utilized for meetings and privacy. This allows flexibility in working style. It also affords companies elasticity in their real estate strategy with a workplace that can be expanded or contracted when necessary.

A one-hour meeting is never just a one-hour meeting.

Meeting organizers are tasked to assemble a group of busy people together at the same time and place. This may involve communicating back and forth with attendees via email or phone. Once everyone agrees on a time to meet, organizers must find a meeting room that fits their needs, reserve audiovisual equipment, order catering and other additional services, register guests at the reception, and ensure the necessary information is available to the finance department for tax purposes.

When finally finished coordinating a meeting, meeting planners may find that they've spent more time scheduling the meeting than they'll spend in the meeting itself.

Consider the different organizational units involved in meetings. Facility Management must ensure that the right amount and configuration of rooms are available. Facility Services must deliver the necessary table arrangements. The Corporate Kitchen prepares food, beverages, or other services. Reception must track the day's visitors, manage check-ins, print visitor badges, notify the host upon attendee arrivals, and check-out guests. Finance must settle costs and manage tax and cost centers.

A one-hour meeting is never just a one-hour meeting. Meeting management is a true cross-organizational discipline with many elements that are prone to poor processes that harpoon employee productivity. Without the right tools that integrate process and bind organizational units together, every one-hour meeting is more likely a five-hour meeting.

Let's do some quick math ...

A company with **250 employees, working 47 weeks per year, spending 4 hours per week planning meetings** loses **47,000 hours of employee productivity per year**.

That's a lot of lost cash.

What's the consequence for the business in lost productivity?

Do you know how many meetings business professionals attend every single week and how much time people spend arranging these meetings?

A study conducted by Atlassian suggests that the average office employee attends 62 meetings a month. This is supported by Ovum in collaboration with join.me by LogMeIn who report an average 17 meetings per week for Senior Executives .

Ovum reports:

- 8 meetings per week, on average, across all employee types and company sizes
- 10 meetings per week for all employees above junior level
- 12 meetings per week for executive management and higher
- 17 meetings per week for VP, director, and C-level roles in highly collaborative industries such as financial services, technology, and media

According to a study conducted in September 2010, business professionals spend 4.75 hours of a typical work week arranging meetings (that's a lot!). This includes booking additional resources for meetings and re-arranging associated bookings and services when meetings are rescheduled or relocated. And this doesn't even include the time actually spent in meetings.

This is supported by new research from eShare. The survey of 1,005 office workers in the UK revealed that the average worker spends one hour nine minutes preparing for each meeting and one hour 22 minutes attending it. Now add the time spent per meeting for the rest of the organization to support that single meeting.

Meetings are an integral part of business life, but many are inefficient, riddled with with incorrect or hijacked agendas, and plagued by attendees lacking the required background information when they need it.

The quality of your meetings falls on you. Improving the meeting management process, on the other hand, addressing the hours wasted on inefficient and ineffective processes, could be the single largest productivity boost for your organization and give you back the time you need to focus on preparing for and leading a great meeting.

Let's do some quick math and look at some easy numbers. A company has 250 employees who work 47 weeks per year. Each employee spends four hours per week planning meetings. That's 47,000 hours per year. Now add all the cross-organizational activities associated with meeting room management. Today's modern, activity-based work spaces make the need for flexible, bookable rooms even more crucial. The numbers of meetings per week will continue to rise going forward.

The conclusion: There is room for improvement

Read on to learn how to improve employee productivity when booking and managing meetings, and enhance utilization and organizational processes from an integrated meeting management system.

It's time to become the "Hero of Meetings" in your organization.

Become a meeting room hero: Win back lost productivity in 3 easy steps

1 Know your company's needs

First thing's first: Ensure that there is a match between supply and demand when it comes to available meeting spaces and the technology inside these rooms. Too often companies believe that all meeting rooms are created equal. That's hardly the case, and that's not going to help you meet the needs of your organization.

This starts with figuring out which types of meetings are most commonly utilized by members of your company. These can include internal meetings, project meetings, sales meetings, external meetings, stand-ups, video conferences, and so on.

These different meeting purposes define the needs you must consider when designing and configuring your meeting spaces. What equipment is needed for an external sales meeting? What's the preferred presentation type for an internal presentation? Do you want large screens or projectors? How do you want to share content to those screens? Wireless HDMI? What about video conferencing? How many rooms must be equipped with conference cameras? Will your company be utilizing Cisco or Polycom, or are you are Skype for Business kind of company?

All these different questions are important to ask to get a clear overview of your company's needs. Meeting room layout, design, and configuration must support these to ensure conference rooms are utilized properly.

Knowing your company's meeting room needs will position you to be able to ensure it's easy to find and book a room that meets users' criteria.

2 Know your people

With a good overview of the types of meetings your company commonly executes and a plan to make any technical improvements to meeting room layout, it’s time to think about who’s involved in the meeting process.

When you book a conference room, do you do it yourself or ask your assistant or office administrator to do it for you? If you book refreshments for the meeting, who manages this? Who announces guests at reception? Who makes table arrangements? Is there a dedicated team, department, or individual to manage meeting costs and tax reports? Who delivers dashboards to management looking for an overview of meeting room utilization?

Make a swim lane diagram to get an overview of processes, time spent on different activities, and systems used. This quick exercise will help you understand where the productivity killer is lying in your organization.

3 Know the tools that change the game

The most important step in your quest for meeting room heroism is in finding the right tool to manage all processes related to meeting room booking and meeting management. Don't force employees to be bogged down with the details of meeting room management themselves. A meeting room management solution takes care of everything in just a few clicks.

A solution like AskCody can completely change the way meetings are booked and managed, and how all associated items and resources are ordered for meetings across organizations and locations, all from inside your current Microsoft Outlook, Office 365, or Google Calendar environment. The AskCody meeting management product suite streamlines room and hot desk booking and management. All those tedious tasks and hurdles to productivity related to meetings? Gone.

With a solution like AskCody, users will be able to search for and book rooms based on availability, the number of people, the purpose of the meeting, and in-room equipment right inside the tools they already use most at work. It only takes a few clicks to book rooms and order associated services from inside Office 365 or Outlook's familiar interface.

With a combination of Office 365, Outlook, and an integrated meeting management solution, you can provide the flexibility your employees need to stay productive and effectively and efficiently manage their time and activities in the modern workplace.

What are the benefit for your business?

Your organization undoubtedly stands to benefit from an integrated meeting room booking software. Meeting room management processes have a direct impact on overall employee performance and organizational financial standing. Meeting room management solutions free up users' time to do what's important to your business instead of spending time on cumbersome, unsynchronized processes.

Large corporations and SMEs alike waste too many valuable resources on inefficient meeting management processes that could be better spent elsewhere. Changing this will entail a collective focus on the approach to meetings across the business world, but smaller steps can be taken today. It's time to get started.

AskCody is an all-in-one productivity platform that helps you simplify meeting scheduling and conference room booking. Save precious time and eliminate aggravating interruptions during meetings.

AskCody helps you create a happier, more productive and efficient modern workplace while optimizing available resources. Seamlessly integrated into your existing Microsoft Outlook and Office 365 environment, AskCody will help you win the battle of the meeting rooms. With AskCody, it's a great day for meetings!

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About AskCody

AskCody is changing the way meetings and resources are booked and managed across organizations and locations, all from inside Microsoft Outlook and Office 365. The product suite streamlines room booking and management, all aspects of the business that have long been recognized as hurdles to productivity and a waste of time. AskCody lets people search for and book rooms based on availability, the number of people, purpose of the meeting, and in-room equipment right inside the tools you already use most. AskCody helps you create a happier, more productive, and efficient modern workplace while optimizing available resources.

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