SPACE CONNECT

Meeting room Management Magic

The Management Guide to Making Meeting Space More Productive and Effective.

Introduction

The power of advanced collaboration and communications technology has not removed the need for people to come together to share their ideas and agree decisions. As long as there are humans at work, there must be spaces for them to meet.

The challenge for organisations, facilities managers and individual workers is how to make the processes around meeting spaces as productive and efficient as possible.

Who is this guide for

This guide is ideal for anyone trying to understand how to improve meeting room scheduling to align with smarter working practices and provide universal transparency to all concerned. This, and the wider evolution toward smart buildings, should not be the sole preserve of large enterprises. Small and mid-sized organisations stand to gain just as much by maximising their agility in this way.

Whether you operate office real estate, manage the resources of an office-based organisation, or simply want to get the most out of your people, read on for deeper insights and practical considerations that help you manage meeting spaces and scheduling more effectively.

The mounting pressure on meeting spaces

Buildings are getting smarter and meeting spaces are changing to meet the modern requirements of agile organisations and dynamic workers. They demand:

Drop-of-a-hat room availability,
so that even last-minute & impromptu requirements can be satisfied without the need to go off site or cancel appointments.

Informal and formal space options,
to accommodate a spectrum of expectations from high-powered client meetings to internal staff catch-up sessions.

Easy access to a choice of AV & catering setups,
to avoid delays, confusion and complexity when giving presentations, hooking up conference calls or holding lunch meetings.

Simple, uncomplicated room access,
to avoid the delay and embarrassment of being unable to locate or access unfamiliar meeting spaces.

An end to meeting space conflict,
so that colleagues don't waste their time (or tempers) resolving clashes and overruns - particularly in front of guests.

However, as our recent research results show, there are significant obstacles to meeting these demands.

As organisations and their meeting spaces evolve to address these new needs, many familiar constraints endure; compounding the issue further. Among them:

Multi-tenanted occupancy

While the largest organisations typically enjoy purpose-built facilities, many SMEs find it necessary to operate within multi-tenanted offices that allow them to scale up as needed. This can add a further layer of complexity to meeting space scheduling.

Lack of specialised scheduling tools

The most commonly used office tool for meeting room scheduling is MS Outlook. This and similar applications (e.g. Google Calendar) are best suited to microbusinesses with only a few, static meetings spaces, and are proven to be inadequate for SMEs and larger organisations.

Finite space

Office space is limited; especially so for meeting spaces that must accommodate all staff being able to book in advance within realistic timescales. When organisations recruit more staff and experience overcrowding pressures, meeting space is often the first to be converted to other business purposes.

Bad meeting space habits

People tend to book spaces, as a precaution against not being able to access them in future, and then not use them. This 'blocking' leads to the inaccurate perception there is insufficient capacity.

Increasing rents

The cost of office space continues to increase, particularly in sought-after locations that attract the largest talent pools. This adds to the pressure on better managing existing meeting spaces, accommodating all user needs and maximising occupancy.

Above all, organisations are committed in their quest for maximum asset utilisation and the pursuit of rapid ROI. However, for these objectives to be achieved, a solution that can prevent space wastage, help save time and boost productivity is of paramount importance.
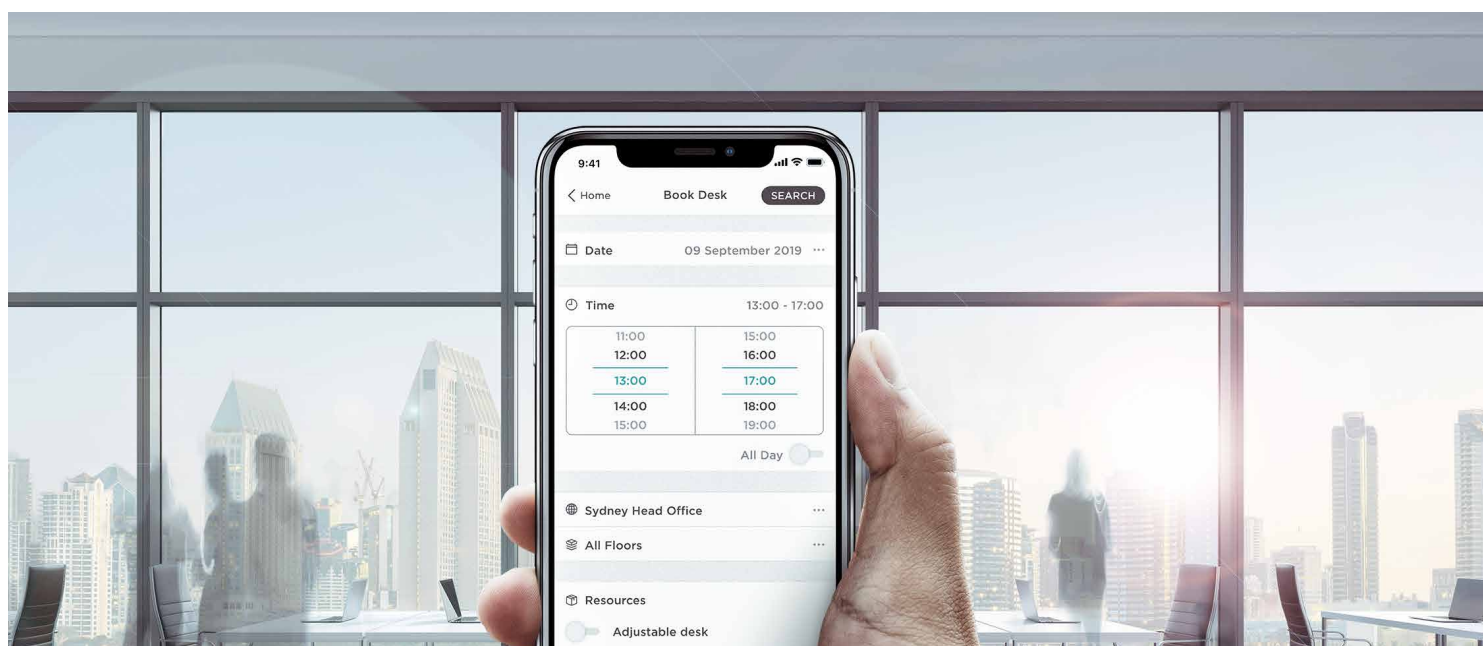
How meeting space friction drains UK office workers' productivity

Our 2018 study of UK office workers reveals the productivity drain and sheer pent-up frustration of finding and booking a free meeting room.

- 94% of respondents said finding and booking meeting rooms is difficult or very difficult.

- In 80% of cases, the process is managed via MS Outlook or other email platform, while others use a receptionist (7%) or writing notes on the meeting room door (3%). Only 10% use a dedicated scheduling application.

- 79% waste a total of more than one working day per year dealing with problems around meeting room scheduling. 31% lose more than 30 minutes per week (25+ hours a year).

- All respondents reported having to kick colleagues out of meeting rooms because of overruns and clashes; 71% do it at least three times a week! This takes its toll, with 27% feeling 'very embarrassed' about the experience.

- 43% of respondents said finding and booking a meeting room was the worst thing to hinder their office productivity.

Adopting better meeting space technology and behaviour

There is a clear need, both for the end user and the building owner/facilities manager, to reduce the frustrations found when booking out meeting spaces. This will inevitably involve utilising the optimum technology to eradicate inefficiencies and boost productivity.

* Online survey of 100 UK office workers at SMEs (Q1 2018)

Ease of user adoption

The radical changes to flexible working practices of recent times offer some important lessons about the introduction of new technology. Firstly, that these are employee-led, and that adoption has followed the path of least resistance in terms of easy-to-use interfaces.

Secondly, that employees are prepared to confront obstacles to their own productivity - even if that means going against company policy. The 'Bring Your Own Device' (and, latterly, Bring Your Own Application/Cloud') phenomena are clear examples of this. Perhaps the most important lesson is that adoption does not automatically follow just because a new system, process or technology is introduced.

This is critical to meeting space scheduling, where individual behaviour needs to be encouraged to resist the temptation to override the process. If your solution isn't more simple than just wandering into an (apparently) empty meeting room in the hope that no-one else comes to chuck you out, then your endeavour will have largely failed.

The extra value sought by managers and decision makers

Preventing employees from losing hours from their day, or having stand-up rows over meeting spaces, is hardly a victory for progressive strategy.

Your business case for adopting a new meeting space scheduling technology demands more than fixing these problems; it needs to present new opportunities to maximise efficiency and productivity.

It needs to support new methods of working and a way to get the most out of your spaces.

Checklist for meeting space scheduling

The meeting room scheduling process is broken in most organisations, but what constitutes an ideal solution?

The following should be considered essential in order to relieve the frustration of end users and equip decision makers with the productivity and efficiency gains they desire.

A familiar, non-disruptive interface

Rather than a separate app that sits outside existing collaboration platforms like MS Office 365 / Exchange Server, you need enhanced meeting room scheduling features to integrate with them end-to-end.

The right space with the right facilities

Enable users to access the most relevant space and facilities for their need, direct from their email calendar. This doesn't just mean listing choices, but interpreting requirements and allocating the most relevant space.

Map routes and layouts

Meetings often don't start on time because participants have trouble finding their way. 3D maps cure that problem, while giving organisers granular detail on how the room works and the facilities available.
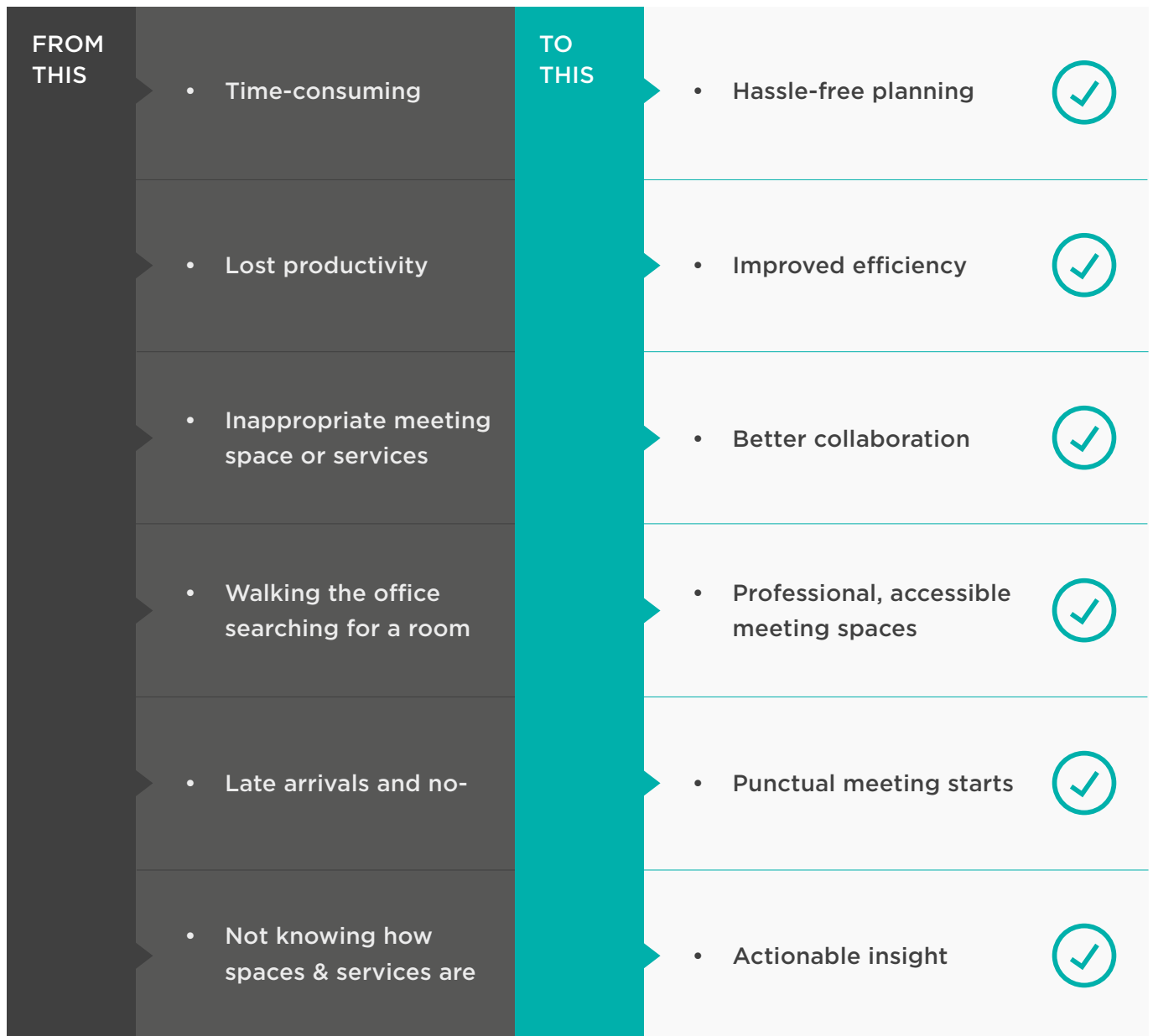
Enforce your unique policies

Meetings don't work the same way everywhere; some organisations cross-charge meeting room costs by department or individual; others implement time-buffers for clean-up and set-up. Ensure your solution fully supports your desired approach.

Visualise historic and real-time trends

Generate actionable insights on occupancy rates, visitor numbers and meeting patterns to identify productivity tweaks, encourage new behaviour and plan for increases or reductions in meeting space availability. Otherwise it's a wasted opportunity to derive intelligence from data.

FROM THIS		TO THIS	
• Time-consuming		• Hassle-free planning	✓
• Lost productivity		• Improved efficiency	✓
• Inappropriate meeting space or services		• Better collaboration	✓
• Walking the office searching for a room		• Professional, accessible meeting spaces	✓
• Late arrivals and no-		• Punctual meeting starts	✓
• Not knowing how spaces & services are		• Actionable insight	✓

The extra value sought by managers and decision makers

The aim of this brief guide has been to show there is a better way for organisations to facilitate how meeting spaces are scheduled and used.

Users will welcome any measure to remove unnecessary obstacles to productivity, as long as the tools are intuitive and seamlessly integrated with existing workflows. At the very least, the ability to reserve the most appropriate meeting space for their need, and having it start on time without risk of

conflict, would be a significant improvement on the current experience. Managers and decision makers must consider the additional benefits potentially available through an enhanced meeting space scheduling solution.

Does it produce tangible efficiency and productivity gains, and can these be accurately measured? Will it add further complexity or align to existing investments? Are you just buying technology for the sake of it, or does it form part of a wider strategy?

How Space Connect can help with your business meeting room management

Space Connect is the world's #1 most affordable, full-feature workspace management platform. Our Meeting Management makes meetings easy.

Use our Meeting Room app to reserve or book any meeting space, book catering and invite attendees from your phone.

Integrate your meetings seamlessly with visitor management and Automate meeting room check-in with video conferencing.

All this good stuff is made quick and easy with Space Connect – and can be configured in minutes!

✓ Calendar integration and Outlook add-in
✓ Catering & event management
✓ Visitor management integration
✓ Conference call integration

See how Space Connect ticks ALL your boxes...

Space Connect brings you a radically different approach to workspace management: Affordable, transformational, easy to deploy and use, and risk-free.

✓ Game-changing value - from just £15 per room, per month
✓ No risk: No lock-in contract.
✓ No minimum term.
✓ No deployment fees.
✓ Fast and easy self-deployment – be up and running same-day
✓ No need for hardware – get the full solution through mobile
✓ Add hardware as you need, via our partners or your own
✓ Full feature set and functionality, as standard
✓ Integrates with the applications you already use

Get in touch

To discover more about how Space Connect can make it incredibly easy and affordable for you to deliver workspace transformation, contact us to arrange a demo, arrange a call or for further information:

Call +44 (0) 845 0945 686.
Email enquiries@spaceconnect.co
Or visit spaceconnect.co

Fast, affordable workspace transformation
www.spaceconnect.co