

Meetings, Meetings, Meetings: The Plague of Business

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How can I lead a better meeting? How can I help a meeting I am not leading? How can meetings be shortened or avoided? These and more answers to follow...

Recently, USA Today published statistics indicating that U.S. business people conduct/ participate in 7.2 meetings per week. Compared to our European and Asian counterparts, that is two to three times the average in other countries. Why? There could certainly be numerous speculations:

- We are not as focused on productivity as we should be.
- We are more interested in communication and relationships than these counterparts.
- Meetings prove our importance, status, or power.

Whether you are leading the meeting or simply participating, you can make the difference between a successful, productive meeting or a waste of everyone's time and energy. Inject some or all of these ideas into your meetings and you will be a hero!

HOW TO RUN A GOOD MEETING

Here are some tips on how to run a good meeting:

- **Don't compete** with group members. Give their ideas precedence over yours.
- **Listen** to everyone. Paraphrase, but don't judge.
- **Don't put anyone on the defensive.** Assume that everyone's ideas have value.
- **Control the dominant people** without alienating them.
- **Realize that your interest and alertness** are contagious.
- **Keep all participants informed** about where they are and what's expected of them. Keep notes on flip charts or a board that everyone can see.
- **Check with the person who owns the problem** to find out if an idea is worth pursuing or if a proposed solution is satisfactory.
- **Give others a turn** at running the meeting. Those who learn to lead learn how to participate.
- **Always have an agenda.** Name a timekeeper to keep the group on track. Do not meet longer than the time designated. Agree to come back together at another time, if necessary or name a task group to address or research a particular issue.