

MEETINGS

4 steps to 5-minute meetings

RACHEL WEINGARTEN DECEMBER 26, 2017

Trying to cut the bloat from meetings might lead to more effective time management and less wasted time during your day. Here are four steps to try.



Recently, *The Wall Street Journal* ran an article highlighting the trend toward [shorter meetings](#) — and by shorter meetings, they meant some that ran only five minutes long. Many of those on the C Level quoted in the piece expressed their desire to cut things shorter and get to the point in what was referred to as a “war on meeting bloat.” The takeaway being that “[p]articipants must learn to distill their ideas and requests to the conference-room equivalent of an elevator pitch.”

But is that always the best approach?

People have been complaining about the way meeting seem to be huge time wasters without accomplishing much, but the reality of business life seems to indicate that five-minute meetings are pretty tough to pull off. That said, trying to cut the bloat from your own meetings might lead to more effective meetings and less time wasted during your day.

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Inspired enough to cut down the length of your own seemingly endless meetings?

Ethan Rasiel, CEO of Lightspeed PR, previously oversaw communications for Samsung USA and had some tips on making meetings more efficient and less time consuming.

Have an agenda

A lot of meeting attendees complain about the feeling that the meeting is going no place. If you're calling in co-workers or employees, respect their time and your own by creating a plan and outline and sticking to it. Rasiel says, "I know people that simply don't show up to meetings if there isn't one. This ensures the meeting has a purpose."

To make it easier, try to prioritize the most important issues so that even if your meeting ends briefly, you've still covered crucial issues.

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Brevity is king

Rasiel suggested that you work on being more concise, since that's the biggest challenge people have in meetings. "Use the Twitter philosophy – speak in short bursts," he says. "Everyone will appreciate this, AND you'll be better understood."

That said, if you're going to take inspiration from social media, try not to use cutesy lingo or acronyms that might be confusing to those in the room. Keep your tone modulated and your words clearly spoken – just try to use fewer of them!

Don't take a seat

Rasiel says that he likes to conduct all his meetings while standing.

"I like to do all meetings standing up. These make them go 10x quicker," he says. "Even those dialing in can be asked to stand. This also gives everyone more energy."

In an office where everyone already uses standing desks for all or part of their workday, this can be a no-brainer, but for others this could be slightly awkward at first. If you plan on introducing standing meetings, try opening your meeting by offering participants the challenge of taking a stand and explain why – and then see where it goes.

Tie everything to action

Rasiel believes that every statement should be tied to an action item. "Don't just make observations," he says. "Talk about what we can DO."

This will require planning on your part. If you hope to motivate participants, offer them challenges to solve throughout their workday or leading into the next meeting. And be prepared to allot some time to bad ideas, since not all options are fantastic on the first time around.

Of course, it's not for everyone...

Whatever you end up doing, it's also important to realize that not every industry can thrive with only five-minute get-togethers and some might require meetings more often.

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