Objectives

- **To become more mindful of when meetings are needed (and when they are not needed)**
- **To learn strategies for making meetings more efficient and effective**

Meeting Statistics

- In the United States, there are around 55 million meetings held each week. That's at least 11 million per day and over 1 billion per year.

- The average worker spends at least 3 hours a week in meetings, with 30% of workers reporting that they spend over 5 hours per week in meetings.

- Organizations spend roughly 15% of their time on meetings, with surveys showing that 71% of those meetings are considered unproductive.

- An estimated $37 billion is lost per year to unproductive meetings.

- Workers spend an average of 31 hours per month in unproductive meetings.

- *https://www.zippia.com/advice/meeting-statistics/#:~:text=According%20to%20our%20extensive%20research,hours%20per%20week%20in%20meetings.

Ask yourself some key questions:

Do I Really Need This Meeting?

Before scheduling a meeting, ask yourself:

- What will this meeting accomplish that cannot be accomplished by email or by phone? What is the end goal?

- If the meeting is needed, should it be in person or virtual?

- Examine the "standing meeting" – is it really necessary?

- How much time do I really need for this meeting? Can it be done in 30 minutes or less?

Who Needs to Come to the Table?

- Revisit the goal of the meeting and make sure to be inclusive of stakeholders (this will help efficiency)

- Invite people who are involved in achieving meeting objectives

- Record virtual meetings when possible so that anyone who isn't there can easily catch up later.

How many is too many?

- Divide and Conquer: Be careful not to invite too many representatives from the same department. Delegate and share notes and follow-up action items after the meeting.

- Inviting too many people can cause everyone to talk over each other or attendees may have no opportunity to voice their thoughts

- Read: "How to know if there are too many people in your meeting"

- Read Why You Should Never Invite More Than 7 People To Your Meeting

Prepare People for the Meeting

- Prepare a targeted agenda, one that is appropriate for the allotted time

- Examine the agenda for "fluff" before sending out

- Be comfortable with a "parking lot" for items that cannot be addressed in the allotted time, but hit key areas first

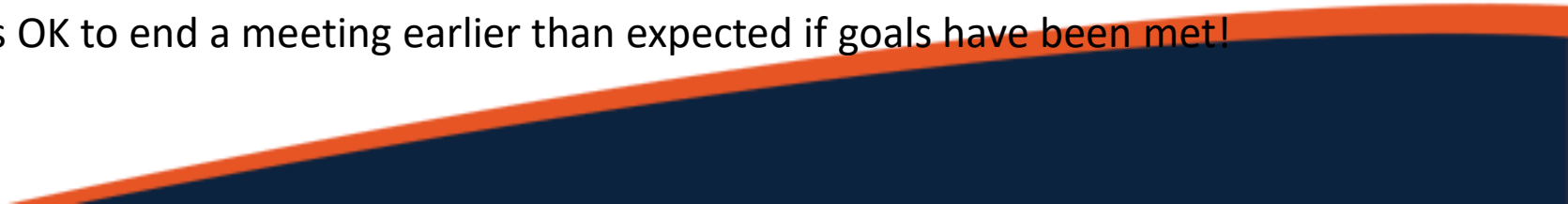# Establish Meeting Ground Rules and Objectives Briefly, FIRST!

- State objectives, but briefly; in fact, put them in the meeting invitation whenever possible

- Establish ground rules as necessary, especially for meetings that may result in some conflict

- Address disruptive behavior respectfully; if that does not work, end the meeting for everyone's sake

Honor Time

"The most precious resource we have is time."

— Steve Jobs

A great way to show respect for your colleagues is to honor their time by:

- Starting the meeting on time & keep time during the meeting to stay on track
- Stick to business as much as possible (pleasantries are nice, but a meeting should not amount to a social hour unless it is for that purpose)
- End the meeting if it is clear that goals cannot be accomplished; debrief after those meetings – what went wrong, and what can be done better next time?
- Demand focus and avoid repetition
- If conflict is preventing progress, know enough to address it and move on OR stop the meeting until people are ready to gather again
- Don't linger after the meeting is done
- Be mindful of "back to back" meetings
- It is OK to end a meeting earlier than expected if goals have been met!

Agree on Next Steps

- Are there any important lingering or outstanding questions? Is everyone clear?

- Who is going to what, and by when? Does it need to be recorded (minutes)?

- Do we need another meeting? If so, is there work to be done in advance of the next meeting so that everyone comes prepared?

Potentially Disruptive Meeting Behaviors

- Working during the meeting
- Not participating
- Taking phone calls or texting
- Arriving late
- No show/No excuse
- Dominating the conversation or not being inclusive of other voices
- Showing up unprepared
- Consider the appearance of being "off camera" during a virtual meeting

Suggestions for Supervisors

- Empower your team members with the "Right to Decline" meetings. However, not showing without declining is unaccepted.

- Try to avoid scheduling meetings during meal times to allow employees their needed break during the day.

- Don't schedule back to back meetings. Try scheduling a 45 minute meeting to allow a break for stretch, grab a drink to allow for a bathroom break.

- Can you move weekly meetings to biweekly or monthly?

- Watch: "How to save the world (or at least yourself) from bad meetings"

Be Intentional

- One concept that has been adopted by some organizations is to establish "no meeting Fridays". This may not work for you given different schedules, but it may be wise to block out a "meeting-free" zone, if possible.

- It may be a good idea to refrain from late-day Friday meetings, if possible, so that employees do not leave for the weekend thinking they have to work the weekend to implement the decisions from that meeting.

- The goal is to accomplish as much as possible to finish the week strong!

Article: Implementing no-meeting days improves productivity

Closing Thoughts

Remember: holding productive and efficient meetings shows that we value the time of others, and shows that we are being good to

EACH OTHER.

Please contact the Office of Human Resources with any questions:

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