

6 Ways to Make Sure Every Meeting Is a Productive One



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As the saying goes, 'A bad attitude is like a flat tire. You can't go anywhere until you change it.'

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A good friend of mine once said, "Time is the most valuable commodity in life because it is the one thing you cannot buy more of." Too bad this adage doesn't hold true at all businesses.

When you think about your workweek it might be astonishing, frustrating and a tad depressing to calculate how much time you spend in bad meetings.

Throughout my career, most recently at [Porch.com](#), I have tried to pay attention to what makes great meetings great. It is a bit of an art, but it is something anyone can master. Here are some tips for people that need a little help.

Related: [The 7 Must-Know Rules of Productive Meetings](#)

1. Set and send the agenda in advance.

It's hard to get anywhere in life without a sense of direction and meetings are no different. Before you start, give people a heads up of what is going to be covered. People benefit greatly by having a sense for where they are going. What type of meeting do you want to have? Do you need people ready and willing to participate in a great discussion? Are you reviewing your scorecard? If so, are you going to look at the red metrics? Are the people responsible for this discussion aware?

By sending the agenda 24 hours in advance you give people a chance to prepare and make most of the time.

2. Start your meetings on time.

This is a huge pet peeve of mine. If you don't start your meetings on time, chances are you won't end on time. Then the next meeting starts late. Before you know it, the entire day is off schedule. This strict time rule needs to happen at the highest levels of the company. If you can start on time with the first meeting of the day (and respect the end time) you set a culture where the importance of people's time is highly valued.

Related: [How to Run a Better Meeting \(Infographic\)](#)

3. Make sure the right people are in the right meetings.

How many times have you sat in a meeting that was literally standing room only? Why are all these people in the room? It is important to have the right people in the right meetings for the right reasons. When you think about the value of time and the people in the room, meetings are a very expensive endeavor. Put some thought into the meeting roster and make sure everyone there has a clear role and purpose.

4. Meetings should be the right length.

I have always felt that great meeting should be as long or as short as it needs to be. If you are good about setting an agenda with clear outcomes you will know when a meeting needs to end. If you can get done in 28 minutes when you thought needed 60 minutes, fantastic.

5. Give every meeting a 'parking lot.'

What do you do when you are in a meeting and you go way off topic, but the discussion is a good one to have? Put the idea in the "parking lot" and make a commitment to revisit that idea at a later date.

6. Don't end a meeting without clear agreement on the next steps.

Before you end your meetings make sure you recap any immediate actions and assign them to the appropriate owners. The worst thing that can happen is nobody follows up and then you have another meeting to talk about what you already discussed.