



Too many bad meetings? 20 tips for a healthier meeting culture

Organisations are promoting collaborative, flatter, less hierarchical and more inclusive workplace cultures for many fine reasons. Consultation, empowerment and engagement are 'in', autocratic authoritarianism is 'out'. And mostly we say that's a very good thing, but there's a catch –

“and that's the curse of an out-of-control meeting culture.”

There's no getting away from it – meetings are the vehicle of choice for managers to communicate and uphold their commitment to these new and more progressive ideals. Yet, as useful and inspiring as a good meeting can be, when your team or company has a culture of back-to-back or poorly led meetings involving a seeming cast of thousands, you're putting wellbeing at risk.

In 2018, 72% of business leaders reported spending 30% more time in meetings than they did five years earlier, with a forecast of yet further increases ahead. 50% of meetings (on average) are reported as being a waste of time.

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In our time-poor worlds, where every hour is a race against the clock, the sheer frustration arising from this frittering of precious time is a source of great stress for most of us. But, it's not just frustration at the universal wastage of time and talent or the opportunity cost that's the issue. Depending on the severity of our situation, meetings can provoke a range of challenging emotions, leaving us feeling:

- Irritated, resentful and begrudging at the waste of time, interruption and hassle factor. In the language of GLWS, this is detracting from not only our sense of Balance & Boundaries but also our Vitality & Energy.
- Mind-numbingly bored (how much doodling can you do?) and checked out at the seeming irrelevance of what's being discussed. The Dutch even have a special word to describe this excruciating state of meeting-induced stupor and torpor – Vergaderzieke. In GLWS language, this is a detractor from having the necessary Intellectual Engagement & Flow.
- Passively resistant and cynical at the (yet more) change coming down the pipeline. In GLWS terms this leaves us querying the Meaning, Purpose & Direction we gain from our work.
- Incandescent with rage at all the posturing, self-validation and grandstanding that goes on. What's with this anyway? Is there anything more unbearable than having to listen to colleagues' insecure claims that seem only loosely connected to the truth, containing errors of omission, strategic manipulation of nuance and exaggeration of select 'facts'? (Yes, we've been stuck in a bad meeting or two.) People are particularly prone to not telling the truth in meetings and we are 'lied' to between 10-200 times per day. In the GLWS, we reflect these elements of trust, respect and mutual regard in our questions around Authentic Relationships and their impact on our emotional Resilience & Equanimity.

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To get our 20 tips for a healthier meeting culture, you'll have to buy the e-book!