

# Suggestions for Making Virtual Meetings More Productive

- Always start the meeting on time, regardless of people who are late.
- Do not review the contents of the meeting with the people who are late for the part they missed.
- Reduce the length of meetings to one hour maximum, and preferably less. Try 30 minutes, even 15 to 10 minutes.
- End the meeting on the agreed-upon time, even if the agenda is not finished.
- Invite fewer people to the meeting: productivity goes down with increasing numbers of participants.
- Allow the right for employees to decline their attendance, without having to justify themselves and without penalties.
- End meetings early. People will be more positive about participating as a result.
- Don't tolerate meeting participants working on other things during the meeting. In a virtual meeting, using videoconferencing software reduces multitasking significantly.
- At the beginning of the meeting, ensure that the desired outcome(s) are stated clearly.
- Limit the action items of your meeting to no more than three.
- Table any discussion that is not relevant to the agenda.
- Whoever calls the meeting should "own" the meeting; don't allow someone in the group to try to take it over.
- Determine the purpose of your meeting and distribute an agenda in advance.
- If visuals are to be used, ensure that a web conferencing tool such as WebEx is used and that everyone will have access.
- If you are using technology, try to book your meeting room 15 minutes in advance to ensure that everything is working properly.
- Be mindful of time zones when you are scheduling a meeting. Use a time zone converter. If this is a recurring meeting, try to rotate any personal time sacrifices among the team members.
- At the start of the meeting, initiate introductions so that people know who is on the call.
- Engage all attendees during the meeting. Draw people out by asking questions to engage them in the conversation.
- Open the call for questions or comments at various points in the meeting.
- Capture meeting minutes and distribute to the group within 24 hours after the meeting.

From "Why Meetings Kill Productivity," Ray B. Williams, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201204/why-meetings-kill-productivity> 04/15/2012. Used with permission of the author.