



Spice up Your Meetings

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Everyone who loves going to your company meetings please raise your hand. Not a big fan of either conducting or attending your meetings? You're not alone.

Complaints of 'too many meetings' are the number two time management complaint I hear from clients, second only to (no surprise) too many e-mails.

It's hard to get it just right. Some companies have too few meetings, not wanting to squander their people's time. This leads to an uninformed staff. Studies show that employees 'in the know' are happier and more productive.

Other companies stay with dreary meetings that have existed for years. Having meetings that are not purposeful does squander your employee's time.

With the holidays fast approaching your employees are entering the 'high distraction' time of year. Their schedules are filling up with outside activities and demands, affecting their concentration on the job.

In order to retain heightened productivity, it's up to you to get more creative. Make all of your interactions with your team more intriguing, including your meetings.

Here are my top seven tips to spice up your meetings:

1. **Think through the purpose**—what specifically do you want to accomplish? Is this an informational meeting that can be a quick 10 minute stand-up meeting? Is it a planning or strategic session? Each type of meeting has its own formula. Blending them can be confusing and take too much time
2. **Limit the participants**—to those who truly need to attend. Spice things up by inviting someone who is not typically in attendance, and let them know their role. Or, let someone off the hook if their time is better spent elsewhere.
3. **Have an innovative agenda**—not simply one copied from your last meeting with the date changed. Shake things up with the order of the agenda, adding to or eliminating items according to your desired outcome. Give participants a reason to want to attend and time to prepare. No advance agenda in the past? Start now.
4. **Stick to the timelines**—this will earn you respect and increase participation. People know that you value their time. Teach people that you start and end at the specified time. If someone has a 10 minutes presentation make sure they stay within that limit.
5. **Don't be a talking head**—in the front of the room. Get others involved in presenting or reporting. Ask outside experts to share their views. Continually surprise participants.

6. **Acknowledge contributions**—such as great questions or observations, especially from those who don't often contribute. Follow up with a brief hand written note letting them know that you appreciate their brilliance and look forward to hearing more from them.
7. **End with action items, timelines and specified accountability.** Participants are more involved when they know specifically what is expected of them. They feel like a part of the greater good. Make them accountable to you, not you to them for the follow-up.

If you are not a fan of the meetings you conduct no one else will be. Or, you may be the only fan. Ask for feedback. Small changes can bring about dramatic results.

Don't wait until January to start anew. Incorporate one of these top '7' tips into your next meeting to elevate the overall experience, and attain the outcome you desire.

Want to learn more on this topic? Pick up Death by Meeting by Patrick Lencioni, who is a great story teller and teacher.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

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