Meeting-itis: The Antidote

9 September, 2014

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Over the Next Hour, You Will Learn:

✓ How to recognize Meeting-itis
✓ Steps to determine when and when *not* to meet
✓ Concrete ways to make meetings a good use of time

At the end, we will be raffling off two Meeting-itis Flipbooks
Types of Distance

Interpersonal Distance: differences in people
Organizational Distance: different functions or companies
Physical Distance: different places
Technological Distance: different technology choices and etiquette
Your Work Meetings

On a weekly or monthly basis, what percentage of your meetings are *valuable use of your time*?

On a weekly or monthly basis, what percentage of your meetings have *the right people attending* to accomplish the meeting’s purpose?

On a weekly or monthly basis, what percentage of your meetings *could be avoided*?
Some Statistics

- Meetings per person per month = 62
- Time wasted in each meeting = 50%
- Hours lost each month per person = 31
- Days wasted per person per month = 4
Current ‘Meeting’ Practices

• How do you currently make decisions about how best to accomplish a task with a group of people?

• What communication and collaboration technologies are available to you?

• How comfortable are you at facilitating virtual meetings?
Key Communication Concepts

- Synchronous versus Asynchronous
- Push versus Pull
- Collaboration versus Broadcast
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synchronous</th>
<th>Asynchronous</th>
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What Are the Benefits and Drawbacks?
Defining Meeting-itis

**Workipedia Definition:**

“A symptom of pain and discomfort caused by the extensive overuse and misuse of meetings in the workplace”.

- Develops in individuals, teams, and organization
- Results in overdeveloped ‘meeting muscle’
- Causes frustration, wasted time, and overall reduced productivity
Causes of Meeting-itis

- Meeting-itis is caused by the default response to meet, usually face-to-face, for a wide variety of reasons and to include as many people as possible.
- Often grounded in the belief that fervent communication and wide-spread inclusion are essential components of a healthy organization.
- Lack of knowledge and comfort with alternative ‘meeting’ approaches is usually an underlying factor.
Do You Suffer From Meeting-itis?

You might if you:

- Feel overwhelmed and burned-out by too many meetings
- Feel that you are spinning wheels in meetings
- Are in meetings filled with side conversations
- Are in meetings that lack focus
- Feel excluded even if you really don’t need to be there
- Are attending meetings with nothing to contribute
- Know the decision is made in a ‘meeting’ before the meeting
- Have technology that you don’t know how to use
Often, the most effective meeting is the one that can be avoided.
Making the Modality Choice

- What do you need to accomplish?
- What level of collaboration do you need?
- What level of data richness do you need?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What else is required – handouts, confidentiality?
No Meeting If:

- Seeking or sharing information
- Making decisions independently
- Handing off work
- Regular status meetings with no major developments
- Determining next steps
- Determining or distributing action items
Meet Synchronously If:

- Need high level of collaboration
- Shared decision-making by all participants
- Part of onboarding process
- It’s been a while
- Others?
Invite the Right People

👍 Who needs to be involved?
👍 Refine your list
👍 For those who *need to attend*: Invite as ‘required’
👍 For those who *need to be informed only*: Invite as ‘optional’
Applying Presence

*Presence* = sense that someone is *there* for you

*Collaboration* = 2 or more people work together toward a common goal
Stages of Collaboration:

**Cooperation**: independent people or groups share information to support each others’ goals

**Coordination**: independent people or groups align activities to support each others’ goals

**Collaboration**: individuals give up some independence to realize a shared goal
Cooperation

- sharing information
- working independently
- making decisions independently
- handing work off
- status updates
- next steps
- action items

Collaboration

- blended types of working together
- common tasks
- compatible goals
- some shared decision making
- interdependent tasks
- introducing new members
- Protocol Review Committee

Coordination

- Brainstorming
- Shared goals
- Shared decision making by all participants (Consensus)
- Protocol Review Committee

Presence Continuum

**Cooperation**
- Best Modalities
  - Discussion Threads
  - Internal Chat or IM
  - Posting documents / data for download from shared drive

**Coordination**
- Best Modalities
  - Blended Approach
  - distributing information electronically
  - in-person; some virtual (phone, video)
  - sharing desktops virtually

**Collaboration**
- Best Modalities
  - In person; with as much information distributed ahead of time.
  - Video Conference
  - Audio Conference
Data Richness

✓ Task requires a high degree of data visible to all
✓ May be mutually editable or simply broadcasting
✓ Success means all parties have access to the information

Data Richness Continuum:

1 = Low
2
3
4
5 = High

Examples of low and high need for data richness?
Virtual Silence

• Is often louder, or deafening
• Due to lack of visual cues to tell us what is happening
• Lack of comfort with silence in general
Possible Reasons For Virtual Silence

• Agreement
• Poorly worded question that doesn’t evoke need for response
• Inadequate information for participants to respond
• Unspoken conflict
• Not acceptable to voice opinion or disagree
• A lack of interest
• Participants are not paying attention
• Language or cultural issue
• No one knows the answer, or what to do next
Sure, but can you make him drink?
How much value did you get out of this meeting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Value</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Lots of Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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How much value did you add to this meeting?

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How Did We Do? Did You Learn:

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Wrap Up: Plus/Delta

Plus ⊕ (I like)

Delta ▲ (I Wish)
For More Information:

Bridging Distance can be found:

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