



Resources

Bad Meeting Checklist

Take this checklist to your next meeting. How many of these bad meeting habits do you see?

- There was no reason for us to meet. This could have been done without bringing a bunch of people together around a table.
- The people present were not actually able to make a decision or move the topic forward. They still had to go and 'check' with someone else.
- People were late, technology didn't work or we had to call people on their mobiles to check if they were coming or not.
- People were distracted during the meeting, accessing their phones, tablets or computers to check email, messages or take a call.
- There was no clear agenda.
- There was no clear process.
- I contemplated why I was at this meeting.
- We had to schedule an additional meeting because time ran out while we were all skirting around the subject.
- Most of us arrived from other meetings with no time to gather our thoughts and be mentally ready for the topic at hand.
- The presenter at the meeting simply read the slides to the participants, and we all zoned out.

If you ticked more than three boxes on this list, it's likely that you need to take some action to improve your meetings.



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Experiment 1 – Painful to Purposeful Record

Use the table below and quietly score the meetings you attend over the next week or two. Score as follows:

- 1 if the meeting was Painful
- 2 if the meeting was Woeful
- 3 if the meeting was Wasteful
- 4 if the meeting was Useful
- 5 if the meeting was Mindful
- 6 if the meeting was Purposeful

Revisit the bad meeting habit checklist from pages xix-xx of The 25-Minute Meeting book. How many of these habits did you see? How did they contribute to your score?

As you begin to implement the 25-minute meeting strategies, tools and techniques, revisit this exercise and notice how these numbers start to improve.

Meeting Information (title, who was there, date, etc.)	Score out of 6 & Reason
<i>E.g.: WIP meeting, marketing team, 03.05</i>	<i>E.g.: 1, The topic of discussion was on a project I have no involvement with.</i>



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Experiment 2 – From Autopilot to Action Hero

Are you on autopilot or are you an action hero when it comes to meetings? Check the boxes in the table below that apply to you when you are in meetings.

(Your team members may also like to rate themselves. This can be a fun and gentle way to start introducing the concept of 25-minute meetings to them.)

Autopilot (60-minute default)	Action Hero (25-minute meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/> There wasn't a clear agenda <input type="checkbox"/> I waffled, or let others waffle <input type="checkbox"/> I didn't really participate <input type="checkbox"/> I was distracted and bored <input type="checkbox"/> We didn't get through the what we needed to <input type="checkbox"/> I felt drained and discouraged at the end <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like I wasted my time	<input type="checkbox"/> I had a laser-like focus <input type="checkbox"/> I was actively engaged <input type="checkbox"/> I stayed present and on task <input type="checkbox"/> We got through what we needed to <input type="checkbox"/> I (and others) left with a sense of accomplishment and purpose <input type="checkbox"/> It was a good use of my time



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Experiment 3 – Just do it

Firstly, decide to keep meetings to 25 minutes from now on.

At the beginning, implement the 25-minute rule in one or two of your regular meetings:

- team meetings
- status report meetings
- one-on-one team member check-ins
- project team check-ins or updates
- random/ad hoc requests for information from you
- random/ad hoc meetings where you need information
- 'drive-by' meetings where someone stops by and says, 'Do you have a minute?' (e.g. 'No, I have 25, let's schedule it in.')

Create a checklist of all your regular meetings, and tick when you have rescheduled each meeting to 25 minutes.

Why stop there?

You may also like to think of other ways in which you could apply the 25-minute rule: exercise, phone calls, bursts of work activity.

Notice the positive changes this brings about.



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Experiment 4 – Being Purposeful

Think about your purpose for just about everything you do from now on.

Given that most of what we do could be described as a meeting (for example, making a phone call is a kind of meeting), take 30 seconds before dialling the number to consider the purpose and outcome for the call.

As you sit to compose an email, stop and consider:

What is the purpose or outcome for this communication?



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Experiment 5 - People Worksheet

For your next meeting, use this worksheet to determine who to invite and the role they would perform.

Who are the key decision makers for the issues involved?	
Who has the most/ best information and knowledge about the topics under discussion?	
Who has a stake in or commitment to the issues being discussed?	
Who needs to know this information in order to more effectively do their jobs?	
Who may need to implement things as a result of the decisions that will be made?	

Experiment 6 – POPP Template

For your next 25-minute meeting, use the POPP worksheet to determine how to design your meeting so that you are clear on the *what* (agenda) and *how* (process) you will follow.

For a 25-minute meeting you should not have more than three items for discussion.

<p>Purpose of the meeting</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give info ○ Get info ○ Share info <input type="checkbox"/> Decide <input type="checkbox"/> Resolve	
<p>Outcome(s) By the end of this meeting we will have ...</p>	<p><i>E.g. Decided whether to proceed with Project X with the current budget and resource estimates.</i></p>	
<p>People who will help us achieve the outcome</p>	<p><i>E.g. Bob Smith (HR lead), Sharon Williams (Finance associate), Cecilia Hoang (Operations associate)</i></p>	
<p>Process to achieve our agenda</p>	<p>What we need to achieve (Agenda Item)</p>	<p>How we will achieve it (Process)</p>
	<p><i>(Scan) Review</i></p>	<p><i>Pre-reading</i></p>
	<p><i>(Focus) Questions/Comments/ Thoughts/Insights</i></p>	<p><i>Post-it note capture, share and cluster. Dedupe (remove duplicates), prioritise and discuss.</i></p>
	<p><i>(Act) Decide on next steps</i></p>	<p><i>Capture any additional info required (if necessary), schedule follow-up meeting (if necessary). Record decision.</i></p>

POPP Template

<p>Purpose of the meeting</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give info ○ Get info ○ Share info <input type="checkbox"/> Decide <input type="checkbox"/> Resolve	
<p>Outcome(s)</p> <p>By the end of this meeting we will have ...</p>		
<p>People who will help us achieve the outcome</p>		
<p>Process to achieve our agenda</p>	<p>What we need to achieve (Agenda Item)</p>	<p>How we will achieve it (Process)</p>



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Experiment 7 – “No Slides” Meetings

The next time you are delivering a deck of slides as part of your presentation, ask yourself if they are needed. What would happen if you didn't use any slides at all?

Send the slides in advance and ask participants to review the content as part of their preparation for the meeting.

Send along with it the questions you want answered in the meeting, or the issues you want discussed, so it will give you direction when you prepare. Be specific, for example: 'The chart on slide 4 shows a decline in sales and I'd like to understand from you if this is a trend or an anomaly'.

The slides you show (if you need to) in the presentation itself would be the questions or discussion points.



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Experiment 8 – Make Space

Take a look at your calendar and note how many meetings you have that are back to back with no space in between.

This means you are likely to either have to leave one meeting early, or be late to the next.

So, from now on, schedule space between meetings for travel, walking or thinking time. This gives you a transition between meetings so that you are not letting either meeting down.

By blocking 30 minutes in your diary for a 25-minute meeting you will immediately give yourself 5 minutes' grace.



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Experiment 9 – Setting yourself up for success

What is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome to successfully set up 25-minute meetings?

Which of the three areas do you need to improve on most: punctuality, preparedness or presence? (Maybe it's all three.)

What could you start doing to make sure that the new 25-minute meeting ground rules are understood by all attending? Think about:

- communicating the new meeting duration
- showing up on time
- being prepared
- distributing pre-reading/pre-work (with plenty of time to review)
- banning all tech



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Experiment 10 – Rapport

Observe rapport out in the world. The next time you are at a restaurant, watch people at tables and notice when they are in or out of physical rapport. Pay attention to when they are all sitting the same, or not.

Notice this yourself with meetings. When are you in and out of rapport with other participants?

How well do you know the people you work with? Do you know if they have kids, pets, hobbies? Where did they spend their last holiday? What sporting team do they support?

Make it your business to find out.

There are people in your organisation that you may not know that well, but still rely on to achieve your work goals. When was the last time you took a moment to get to know someone?



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Experiment 11 – Produce Template

Use this worksheet to plan the structure, processes and timing to be used at your 25-minute meetings.

Structure	Process(es)	Timing
Scan		
Focus		
Act		5 mins

After a while, this will become second nature and a tool such as the above won't always be necessary.

In addition to using Scan, Focus, Act as the backbone for your next meeting, look for other ways to use it.

For example, Scan, Focus, Act is a great tool to use to structure a presentation, compose an email, and review a document or paper.



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Experiment 12 – Proceed Template

At the next few meetings you attend where you are a participant rather than the organiser, pay attention to how well, or not, agreements, actions and follow-up are done.

If it is not being done, take up the role of facilitator and ask:

- What are the actions today?
- When are they due?
- What do we believe the next steps are?

Capture them in your phone, handwritten notes, or on a whiteboard. Distribute them immediately after the meeting.

For your meetings, use this template to capture the deliverables from the meeting.

Who	What	When	Where	Why



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Experiment 13 – Be a radio producer

For your next 25-minute virtual meeting, channel your inner TV or radio producer.

Think of your virtual meeting as a talk show.

Who could be a dynamic and interesting guest speaker?

If you must use slides or other supporting visuals, how could you make them more appealing and engaging?

What latest trends or social media memes or videos could you open the session with that are appropriate to the topic? (Only use this if you can make it link to your topic.)

What opportunities for interaction could you include, such as polls, shared whiteboards or around the table chat functions?



Resources

Experiment 14 – Mix it up!

Have you ever tried to mix your meetings up to inject some fun and play into them?









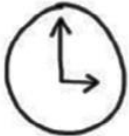



If not, then why not start now? You might try one of the following techniques used at organisations I have worked with:

- Use strange times to start meetings. Start your daily staff meeting at 8.48 am. It can help to eliminate tardiness.
- Connect before content. Pose a question to get people out of their comfort zone, e.g. 'What are your doubts about what you're working on?'
- Go somewhere unusual. Hold meetings off site, for example play basketball to energise staff and encourage creative thinking.
- Use ping-pong paddles. Keep meetings on point by raising a paddle or spoon when someone is going over old ground.
- Sing a song. Pick a song to sing if you are late, such as 'Happy Birthday' or the national anthem.
- Donate money for interruptions. Fine people for interrupting and gift the proceeds to the company's charitable foundation to cut down on the amount of interruptions during a meeting.
- Set and stand up. Set a timer to 25 minutes and at the 20-minute point make everyone stand up to create a sense of urgency to finish things up.

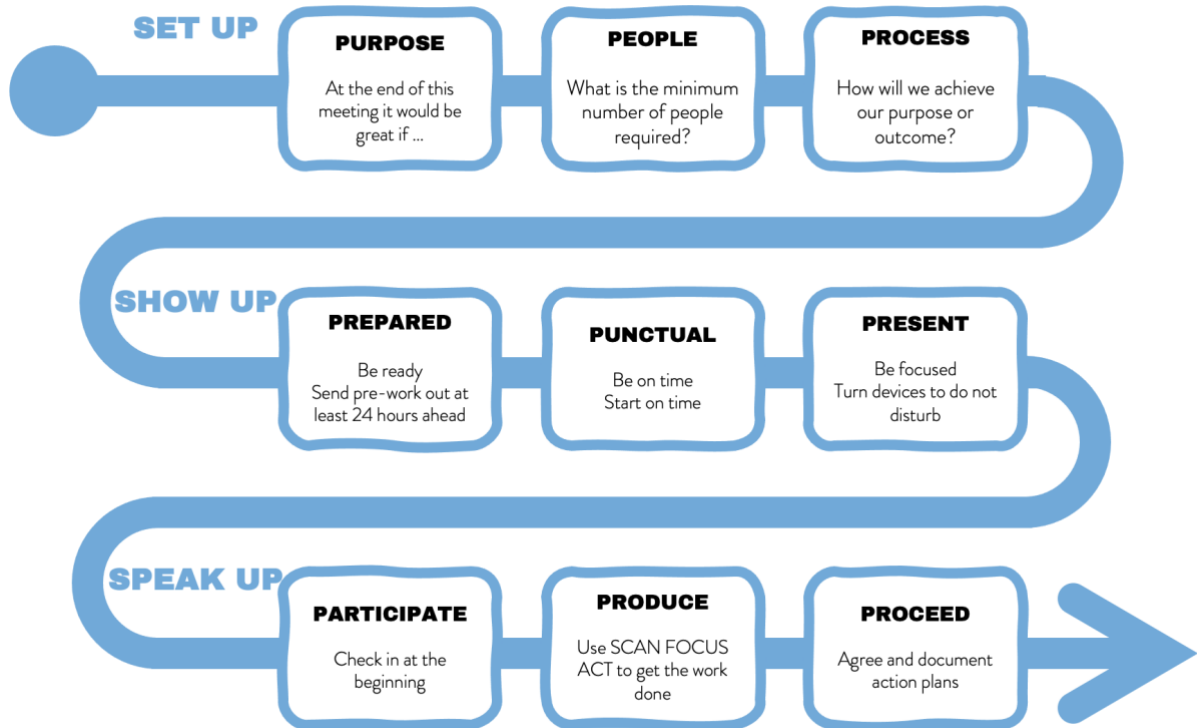


Experiment 15 – Grow your Visual Vocabulary

Grow your visual vocabulary. Practise using your own note taking and find opportunities to get up to the whiteboard or flipchart. The table below shows some simple icons to start with.

 <p>Book Knowledge Learning</p>	 <p>Person Individual Human</p>	 <p>Page Note Contract</p>	 <p>Road Strategy Vision</p>
 <p>Flag Signpost Target</p>	 <p>Building Organisation Company</p>	 <p>Flipchart Presentation Learning</p>	 <p>Globe Global World</p>
 <p>Clock Time Plan</p>	 <p>Cloud Storm Threat</p>	 <p>Bomb Stress Trap</p>	 <p>Computer Network Connect</p>

25 Minute Meeting Roadmap



BONUS – Facilitation Map Template

[Session Name]

[Session Date]

Start	Time	Topic Description	Lead/Resources
8:30	<i>Duration of session, eg 30 mins</i>	<i>Topic/Outcomes/Process/Steps/Activity, eg: By the end of this session, participants will... Activity: Introductions, participants to answer 3 questions... Break into groups of 4, with a flipchart and brainstorm ...</i>	<i>Name of person who is leading the session Resources, eg post it notes, slides, workbook, flipchart stands</i>
9:00			
10:00	15	Break	
10:15			
12:00	60	Lunch	
1:00			
2:30	15	Break	
2:45			
4:30		Close	

*Add additional lines as required.



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BONUS - Formal Meeting Agenda Template

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Title	<i>Title of the Meeting</i>	Date & Time	
Primary Purpose	<i>Purpose//Outcomes/Results</i>		
Participants	<i>List of Participants and any apologies</i>		
Meeting Leader	<i>Name of Meeting Leader</i>	Facilitator	<i>Name of Meeting Facilitator</i>

DETAILED AGENDA		
Time & Duration	Content/Process	Lead/Resources
9am – 10 mins	<i>Introductions/Recap/Review/Outcomes</i>	<i>Name of person leading discussion</i>
	<i>Expectations/Protocol/Needs</i>	<i>Post it notes, flipcharts, slides</i>
	<i>Discussion Point</i>	
	<i>Discussion Point</i>	
	<i>Discussion Point</i>	
	<i>Discussion Point</i>	
	<i>Next steps/Actions</i>	

*Add additional lines as required.



Resources

Bonus - Meeting Charter Template

What

Purpose of meeting/typical discussion points

Frequency & Timing

Eg Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly, Daily Day and Date

Meeting Protocol

Documentation: eg, reports, white papers, etc

Attendance: eg, Yes or No representatives allowed

Outcome: eg Agreement, info sharing, decisions, etc

Who

Chair:

Secretary:

Members: