

Seven Steps To Combat Meeting Fatigue

by [Steve Brown](#)  [human resources](#) [employees](#)

Summary: Staying connected in a hybrid work world can mean more meetings. Yet, too many meetings can burn employees out. Now is the time to evaluate how effective your meetings are and how many are needed. Here are seven steps for more effective and inclusive meetings.

Narcolepsy is a rare disease that causes people to be extremely sleepy during daytime hours and even suddenly fall asleep. In addition to excessive daytime sleepiness, sufferers can experience sudden muscle tone loss as well as hallucinations. It is a problem that impacts roughly 3% of the global population. Yet, only about a quarter of the people who suffer from the condition have been diagnosed. Given that fact, medical experts predict the number of people who suffer from the rare disease is actually much higher.

While the average employee isn't subject to sudden bouts of sleep during the day, meeting fatigue may be hard to identify too. While there was a time when Zoom was the only way to meet, now meetings can be virtual and in-person. A recent study found that [employees have spent roughly 25% more time in meetings](#) since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it is important to stay connected through meetings in this new hybrid world, it is also important to understand the impact of too many meetings. This can lead to stress, general fatigue, and burnout. Now is a good time for community financial institutions (CFIs) to revisit the way managers and senior employees approach meetings, ensuring that they are effective as well as relevant and inclusive.

Blueprints for success

In the same way that blueprints are critical for the construction of safe and sturdy buildings, taking the time to make a plan for a meeting can mean the difference between a successful gathering of employees or an ineffective use of people's time. When scheduling meetings, managers should create agendas that clearly lay out the main issues/topics to be discussed and indicate a clear start and ending time. Meetings should err on the shorter side, as lengthy gatherings are rarely more productive.

It is equally important to spell out for attendees the main point of the meeting. Is it to brainstorm? Or is the purpose to receive assignments to work on? Attendees should know this ahead of time so they can be appropriately prepared.

When you plan your meetings, make sure that you only hold meetings that are necessary. If a question or discussion can be accomplished just as easily over a group email or chat, it is unnecessary to pull people away from their projects and tasks to meet.

Once you have determined a meeting is needed and you have a plan in place, steps should be taken to keep meetings on track.

Seven steps for effective and inclusive meetings

1. **Share agenda beforehand.** Providing the meeting agenda, with its purpose, ahead of time gives the attendees a better idea of the meeting expectations. This way, attendees can prepare accordingly.
2. **Prioritize start time.** Hold people accountable for arriving promptly at the meeting. Failing to do this, particularly among senior employees, sends the message to others that their time is less valuable.
3. **Socialize.** Start meetings with a few minutes of social time, or some sort of ice breaker, to facilitate a more cohesive feeling among attendees.
4. **Encourage suggestions in writing.** Ask meeting attendees to submit suggestions or questions in writing. This allows everyone the chance to weigh in and gives people pause to think of an idea or insight to contribute as opposed to spontaneously throwing out half-hearted ideas. For remote meetings, the chat feature or online whiteboards can be effective ways to do this. If meetings are in-person, old-school whiteboards, or even just slips of paper, can be used to gather this input. This activity also allows those employees that are less assertive to make themselves heard more discretely.
5. **Highlight results.** Earmark the last five or 10 minutes of a meeting to discuss how anything discussed previously will be implemented and which individuals will be responsible for specific tasks. This information should be documented and circulated immediately after a meeting to hold people responsible and give attendees a sense of accomplishment with the meeting.
6. **Stay on time.** End meetings on time or even early, if possible.
7. **Schedule meeting-free days.** Start with one or two a month and then, if possible, expand that to once a week. This way, employees will know they have some uninterrupted work time to focus on detailed or complex projects. In fact, a recent study by four business school professors showed that [productivity at companies increased 35% with one meeting-free day a week](#).

In a hybrid work environment, too many meetings can put employees on overload. Revisiting the number of scheduled meetings and taking steps to make them the most effective will help. We know that you won't fall asleep at the wheel on this important issue.

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ECONOMY & RATES

Rates As Of: 06/01/2022 07:45AM (GMT-0700)

Treasury	Yields	MTD Chg	YTD Chg
3M	1.16	0.31	1.10
6M	1.64	0.23	1.45
1Y	2.12	0.03	1.73
2Y	2.65	0.09	1.91
5Y	2.92	0.10	1.66
10Y	2.93	0.08	1.41
30Y	3.09	0.04	1.18
FF Market	FF Disc	IOER (Interest on Excess Reserves)	

0.83	1.00	0.90
SOFR	Prime	OBFR (Overnight Bank Funding Rate)
0.79	4.00	0.82

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