

# Business meetings: From time-wasters to productivity boosters

 By Leigh Andrews

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With advances in technology, a [younger workforce](#) and the rise of multinational companies with staff based across the globe, remote workers are on the rise - and so is the dreaded conference call. Here's how to take learnings from these typical time-wasters to make your business meetings more productive.



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Waiting around at the specified meeting time for other attendees to join. Having to reintroduce yourself, even though you've been in numerous meetings with the same crowd before. Forgetting whether it's the 5- or 9-digit password that lets you into the call. Having someone steal your thunder by making your point before you can, and constantly having to start over when late attendees join in or fade out because of a poor connection. Then there are echoes, barking dogs in the background and not sticking to the agenda.

It sounds like the frustrating set-up for a bad movie but it's actually the premise of the roughly four-minute 'Conference call in real life' video from '...In real life' themed YouTubers [Tripp & Tyler](#) that first made us laugh in 2014 that's making the rounds online again. It's embedded below if you haven't seen it yet:

What makes it funny is that it's an office situation most of us have been in. Little wonder meetings are seen as the [ultimate time-waster](#) and creativity killer – but for most of us, they're an everyday reality, especially when we're client-facing and working with big teams to reach that business bottom line. Just last week, *Baseline* magazine released a slideshow listing 12 reasons “Why so many meetings are a waste of time”. Luckily, there are ways to make meetings more productive. Here are four ways to do so...

## Four tips for more productive meetings

1. Is the meeting [really necessary](#)? If it's to resolve a simple 'yay or nay' issue, rather send out a compulsory vote email. That way you limit the time spent on the issue as everyone wants to share their views on why they've gone for A over B. If you don't need that level of detail, don't make it an option and don't involve everyone if they don't need to be there.
2. Ensure everything's **ready beforehand** – you've sent out a meeting agenda, the venue is easy to access and booked for your specific meeting, internet/Skype connectivity issues are sorted and all equipment necessary is charged and ready to go. Consult the *Harvard Business Review's* [meeting checklist](#) when planning your next meeting to ensure you've covered all your bases.
3. Stick to the set time-limit and be sure to **start on time**. If the key attendees haven't joined 10 minutes after the scheduled time, either start without them or reschedule. As *Entrepreneur says*: “Five people gathered in a conference room at 10am should not wait five minutes for a straggler.”
4. If your meeting involves remote workers, Boris Dzhangarov suggests holding short [one-on-one check-ins](#) with them weekly. It's easier than keeping them hanging online (or on the line) for that office meeting to start, where their voice will likely be drowned out by everyone else sharing their views.

The [Huffington Post](#) sums it up well: “A productive meeting can be tremendously valuable.” Making them more productive will soon see them move out of the realm of dread and into something positive that actually boosts business morale.

If all else fails, try holding ‘stand-up meetings’, which are exactly [what they sound like](#) and ensure everyone makes a move to get their point across quickly before they can get back to their desks and get on with the day.

Share your own [#productivemeeting](#) tips with us on Twitter!

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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