Hitchhiker’s Guide to Meetings

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Listen
Empathize
Ask
Paraphrase
Summarize

Avoid Bikeshedding

Business meetings can be a nightmare. The key to avoiding this is to be prepared and to properly lead the discussion.

Listen
- Actively listen to what they are literally saying.
- Remember, you have filters.

Empathize
- to understand, to see through the eyes of another.
- “Let me be sure I understood what you said”

Ask
- Use different types of questions.
- Fact-finding
- General (Open)
- Direct
- Leading

Paraphrase
- Play it back to them and obtain control of the conversation.
- Shows you are listening to them (and you care).
- Provides a clarifying effect for others in the meeting.

Summarize
- Brief + Concise + Inarguable
- Establish authority
- Reconnects audience

Meeting Invitation
- Describe the goal
- Criteria to cancel
- List any preparation

Searchable notes
- Make meeting notes accessible and searchable for everyone who participates.
- Including people who weren’t even invited.

Raise up the Conflict
- Conflict is interesting.
- Every problem has conflict, expose it and address it.

Avoid Big Meetings
- Dialogue is challenging.

Avoid Bullets
- We are visual creatures.

Perspective weaving
- Weave the story of others into yours.

Everyone is different
- Meet individually with others to understand their perspective.

You are attracted to:
- BIG
- Avoid
- Bikeshedding

Defragment your Calendar
- Establish scheduling patterns within your teams to keep routine meetings to segments of your day (morning / afternoon)

Minimize distractions during meetings
- Manage their impact on your ability to focus.

Queue-based Meetings
- Routine group work may require routine meetings.
- Schedule a re-occurring meeting that only occurs based on the queue of topics / work.

Queue:

Feed distractions in small bursts
- Free time