



# How effective are your meetings?

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*January 2017*

# *How effective are your meetings?*

## **Do people say this about your meetings?**

**“I’m more confused after the meeting than when it started.”**

This individual and others who took part in Connect’s Fall 2016 survey about meeting effectiveness **shared painful encounters with a key element of work – the meeting.**

The following pages:

- **Highlight the key survey findings**
- **Suggest simple remedies to reduce the pain and improve performance**
- **Explain how to improve the meeting experience to optimize performance**

# *Key Survey Findings*

**Meetings can distract more than add to our productivity and quality of work.** An analysis of the survey respondents shows **three big pain points:**

- 1. Less than half of meetings achieve their objectives** – assuming the participants know what those objectives are.
- 2. Most heavy lifting is done in the meetings**, missing opportunities to do valuable work ahead of and after meetings.
- 3. Individuals running the meetings can let them get off track** – and derail.

**There is one bright spot.** Individuals who either:

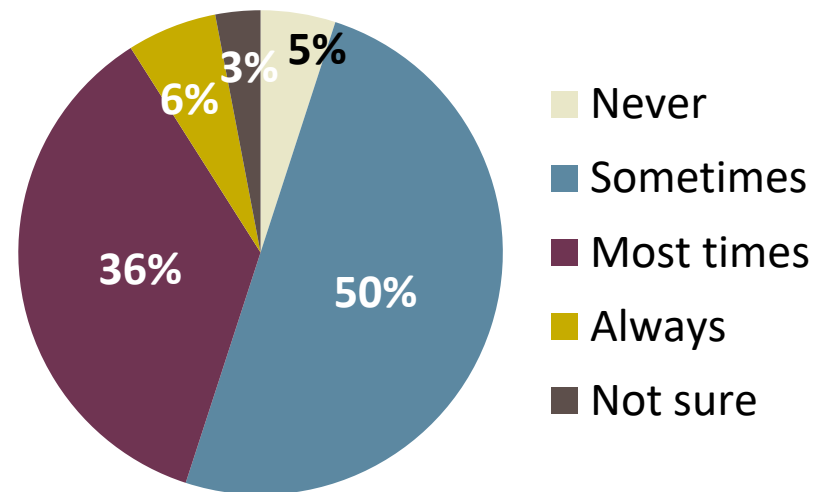
- **telecommute some or all of the time**
- **spend more than 50% of their time in meetings**

**were generally more positive about their meeting experiences.**

# *Pain Point #1: Meetings not achieving objectives*

- Only 6% say their meetings always achieve their objectives; 36% say most times.
- Yet, only 13% know the meeting goals all of the time; 40% most of the time.
- This pain point adversely affects how people feel about spending time in meetings, as well as hurting their productivity, based on their survey answers and write-in comments.

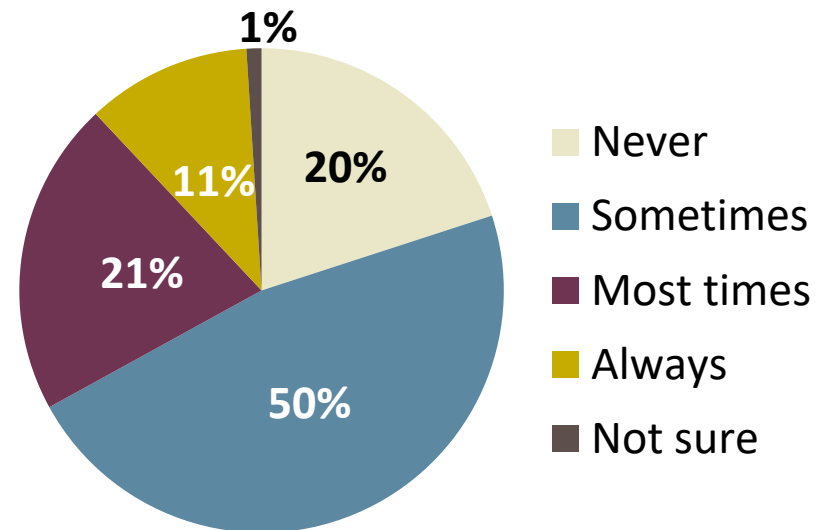
**Meeting Objectives Achieved**



## *Pain Point #2: Minimal focus on preparation*

- Advance preparation for meetings is inconsistent.
- As mentioned before, just over half (53%) receive the meeting goals in advance all or most of the time.
- Only 11% always have a copy of the agenda; 21% most times.
- Only 23% always know what the room set up is, or procedures for the teleconference or webinar; 23% always.

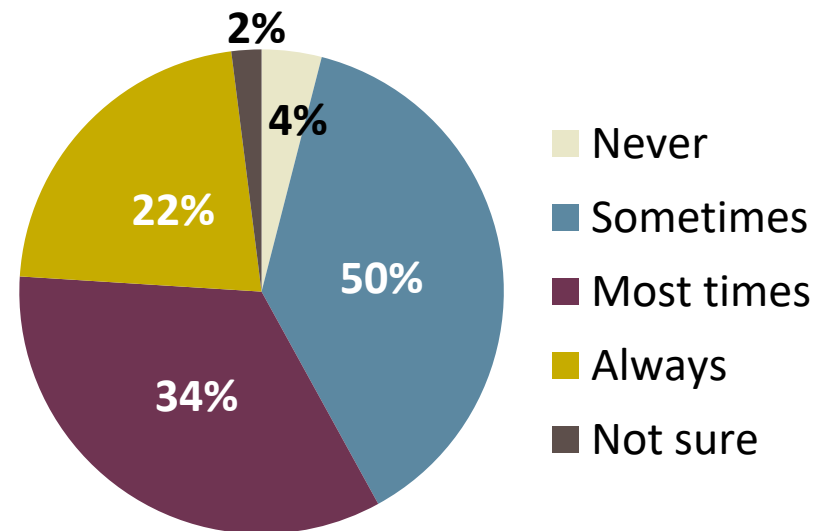
**Receiving advance copy of the agenda**



# *Pain Point #3: In-person facilitators not strong enough*

- Overall, fewer than a quarter (22%) say their meeting leader always keeps their meetings on track. About a third (34%) say most times.
- Two groups, however, reported greater success with their meeting leaders:
  - Those who regularly participate in virtual meetings said their meeting facilitators keep things on track -- 30% always and 30% most of the time.
  - Those who spend more than 50% of their time in meetings reported that their meeting facilitators keep things on track -- 13% always and 63% most of the time.

## **Able to rely on meeting leader to keep meeting on track**



# *In their own words: selected write-in comments*

- “I’m roped into far too many meetings that I don’t have anything to contribute on, and then sometimes find that the critical meetings I wish I’d gotten to come to I wasn’t invited.”
- “Happy when it’s over.”
- “They (meetings) suck all my energy, cause me to be emotional and edgy, make me feel like I’m in a loveless marriage (far from engaged), make my heartrate peak, and keep me from working achieving the results I want.”
- “I feel like a lot of the meetings I attend are a waste of time.”
- “Every meeting request should be sent with an objective and an agenda which reaches the objective. Meetings are the biggest obstacle to getting work done.”
- “I think there are too many meetings, and not enough resolving. Hell, we have meetings about meetings. It’s ridiculous.”

# *In their own words: selected write-in comments*

- “Meetings should be made sparingly, move quickly and (ideally) end early. Meetings are sometimes greater productivity killers (in my estimation) than office gossip, or time spent “screwing off” online. The problem is that while sometimes necessary meetings keep many of us from getting any actual work done.”
- “I generally find our meetings unhelpful and repetitive.”
- “It is key to differentiate between “thinking-out-loud” meeting discussion and the more refined responses all team members – introverts and extroverts – contribute when fully prepared for any meeting. Clarity of purpose, boundaries/scope, roles, and opportunity to properly complete advance work improve meeting success measurably.”
- “At least they provide a free lunch. It’s the only useful think I get out of this.”
- “I have been in the workforce more than 30 years and it seems to me that people spend most of their time in meetings thinking about how they can use the meeting to enhance their own standing (within their department, division, etc,.) rather than actually listening to whomever is currently speaking.”



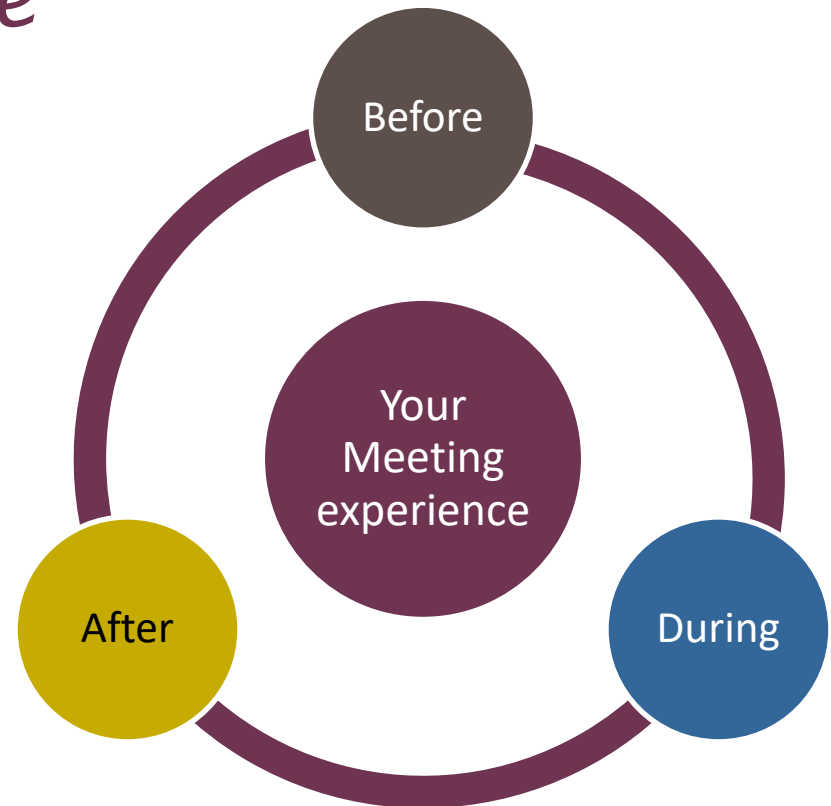
# *Simple remedies to reduce the pain*

These **simple remedies** can help improve meetings for all employees, whether they participate in meeting marathons or a random meeting once in awhile:

- **Take time to prepare**
  - Create and share an agenda, including the meeting objectives
  - Invite the right people
  - Schedule appropriate time, such as 15 - 30 minutes, 45 minutes or 1.5 hours
- **Lead strongly, especially at open and close**
  - Empower a facilitator to guide the people, content and the process *(and if needed, provide training plus process steps and tips)*
  - Before closing, take time to clarify the meeting outcomes and actions steps with responsibilities and deadlines

# *How to improve meeting experiences to optimize performance*

- View your meetings as experiences with three phases:
  1. Before
  2. During
  3. After
- Adopt brain-friendly principles to keep attention, interest, and energy levels high, that will improve:
  - Outcomes, including decisions
  - Productivity
  - Satisfaction



Maximize your meeting experiences:  
Aim for **energy...emotion...edge**

# *How to improve meeting experiences to optimize performance*

More about the phases:

## 1. Identify your **GAME** before the meeting:

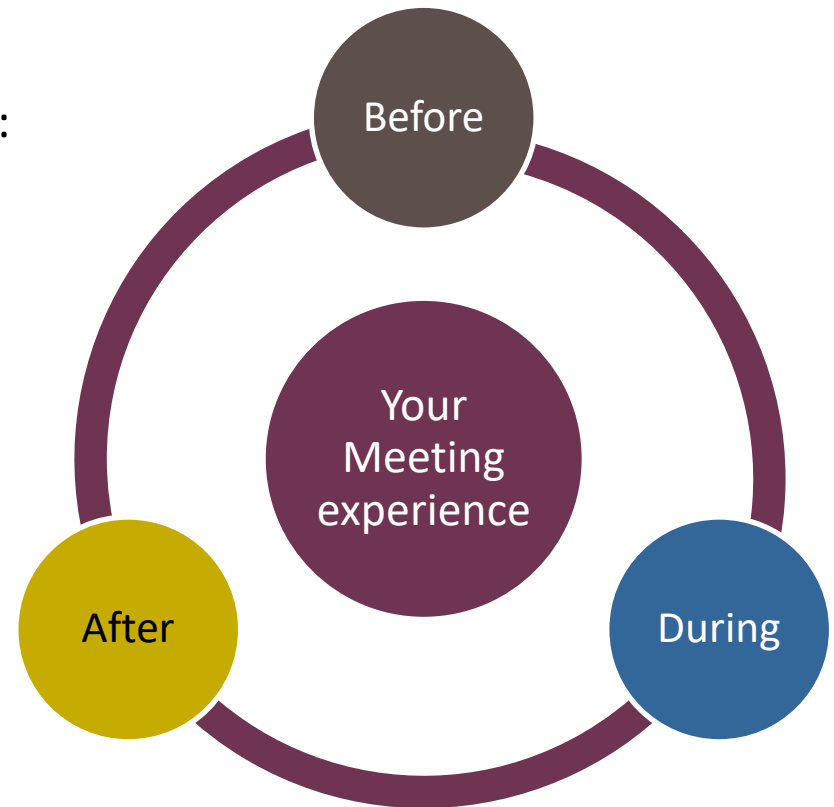
- Goals
- Agenda
- Mindset
- Environment

## 2. Guide the **PLAY** during the meeting:

- Participants
- Logistics
- Action orientation
- “Yes, and....” approach

## 3. Tally the **SCORE** after the meeting:

- Socially sensitive
- Content covered
- Outcomes achieved
- Recognition given
- Execution underway



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# Now what? Actions to take

To reduce your meeting pain, download these free tools:

- [Sample meeting agenda](#)
- Meeting notes
- [10 healthy meeting habits](#)

To cure your meeting pain and improve your productivity, contact Liz Guthridge of Connect to:

- Diagnose your biggest meeting pain points
- Bring brain-friendly features to your meetings
- Introduce the meeting experience for your organization (*before, during and after*)
- Provide facilitation training and support

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