



Top Tips for Effective Meetings

Design effective meetings: Effective meetings don't happen by chance. They happen when they are intentionally designed to focus on the important issues and facilitate informed discussion. High-quality meeting materials, calendars, and well-designed agendas that focus on broader strategic issues before more routine items are helpful tools in designing effective meetings.

Plan ahead: The meeting actually starts before the set meeting time—for everyone. Ideally, meeting materials are distributed well in advance (1 to 2 weeks), so that everyone has an opportunity to prepare. Operate under the assumption that everyone has read the materials in advance. As much as possible, ensure information is presented consistently (e.g., through the use of a briefing note).

Encourage a culture of continual improvement: Learn what works at meetings and what doesn't. Use this intelligence to refine agendas, meeting norms, and personal behavior. Holding a 5-minute feedback discussion at the end of each meeting is a powerful way to shape future meetings and Board conduct.

Set norms: Together, create a set of norms or ground rules for meetings and Board interactions. These can be as simple as starting and finishing on time or using a "parking lot" for flagging important conversations to be discussed in the future.

Follow through: Remember that meetings are only one piece, albeit an important piece, of the Board's shared work. Much of the Board's work is done between meetings by individuals and committees. This work can only happen with shared and consistent follow-through supported by clear decisions, action items, next steps, and accountability.