

If you wish going to someone else's office to have a benign effect, plan it. Don't just drop in! That's a real shocker and brings up panicked thoughts like "My office is a mess!" "Why didn't I put my lunch away?" and so on. (Of course, having the boss see you as such an avid worker that you don't even leave for lunch is not all bad!)

Neutral Territory

A conference room or other generic work area that has no unique **personal identity** is **still another** meeting environment with built-in messages. This kind of territory says:

"Concentrated, Objective WORK Done Here."

- It implies focusing on a subject, on problem solving, not on each other.
- It speaks of leaving the daily considerations of the job outside while you both (or all) direct total effort toward a discreet topic.
- It speaks of the anonymous and transitory nature of the meeting—that no one makes a real dent or leaves a mark here, and that the waters close over and erase what you did as soon as you leave, making ready for the next users.

The down side of conference rooms is that they are very impersonal. Effort must be made, if the meeting is a lengthy or intense one, to warm up this environment and make it personal.

- The colors and accouterments in such a room have a great bearing on how much such an environment invites people to give their all for an abstract idea and how stimulating it is creatively. Notice that ambiance and use it as a decision factor, too.

- Conference rooms need to be made more nurturing environments if you want people to put out and give much of themselves. Meetings in conference rooms should therefore include feeding, both for its break-in-the-proceedings value as well as for two sensual messages it sends to the participants: the feeling of being "stoked up," which encourages people **to** put out more energy, and the feeling of being valued and cared about because someone is aware of and giving to them.

Consider going to a neutral territory conference room if one of your goals is to equalize the proceedings and get everyone focused on business, not on oneupsmanship.