

some hard information about when he/she usually returns, when he/she will be going out to lunch on the day of your meeting, etc. Give an extra half-hour to allow for lateness and the inevitable messages that are always waiting to be handled as soon as he/she gets back from lunch.

"Rush Hours"

Traffic going and coming from work causes many people to make elaborate arrangements, if they possibly can, to beat the crunch.

Find out when your other participant(s) likes to leave or arrive at work and how successfully he/she/they carry that out. The last thing you want is to face a fuming, irate survivor of the daily transportation struggle.

- Some people love to arrive at 7:00 A.M. to get a head start on their work. They might be very receptive to a breakfast meeting or at least a very early one. (More about the pros and cons of eating-meetings in the next section.)

- People who take trains have very rigid schedules and begin to get uptight as the witching hour approaches. Asking the boss for a late afternoon meeting can be deadly unless you know that he/she is very loose about which train he catches.

- Bosses should be aware that car-pooling has its own set of disciplines and you may **not** be dealing with a totally self-determining employee when you call a meeting at the end of the day or first thing in the morning. This creates great tension for an underling who has to ask to terminate a meeting called by a superior, or who comes late through no fault of his own. Very late or very early meeting planners—beware!

Distractions

The last aspect of the best meeting time to consider is: When can you get undivided attention?

- If you're going to someone else's office for the meeting, ask or observe and discover the other person's work schedule.

- If the meeting is in your office, think about when you are least likely to have to take calls or make decisions as well as when your opposite number is least likely to get called away.