title: **Is there any effective way to persuade someone who wants to schedule an (unnecessary) call with me to use**
Asynchronous means of communicating with me like email instead?
num_comments: 19
num_up_votes: 55
upvote_ratio: 0.95

Post Text

I've posted a variation of this on another forum but unfortunately, not a lot of folks there are programmers
so they don't quite understand the importance of asynchronous communication. It's a huge pet peeve of mine
when someone asks me to jump on a quick call for, say, 15 minutes because it'll often cost me far more than
15 minutes because I'll need to schedule the call and have to interrupt what I was doing.. and after the
call, I have to get back into my flow state again. Asynchronous communication also gives me time to think
and reflect on problems and issues without having to provide a response right away to, say, fill in the
awkward silence. Sometimes, a situation might arise when synchronous communication might be preferred
(usually it's evident when we go back and forth an excessive number of times when attempting asynchronous
communication) and I will be flexible in switching to synchronous from asynchronous. Also, there are plenty
of articles out there that explain the perks of asynchronous vs synchronous communication and I agree with
many of them, but I'm not here to further discuss why asynchronous is better and more suitable for someone
like me. I'm looking for the most effective and painless way to persuade someone who wants to have a phone
call, video call, or even an in person meeting with me to instead communicate asynchronously with me instead
(say by email, instant messaging, text, etc) especially if the issue can be reasonably resolved on
asynchronous communication alone. I'm aware that old habits die hard and there are some people who just
won't change so I'm not expecting a silver bullet here. But right now, I'm in the midst of a job search and
my calendar is inundated with calls with recruiters day in and day out which makes it difficult for me to
get the Deep Work needed to make headway at my current job (even though I'm wishing to leave it sooner or
later) and a lot of these conversations could have been resolved using email instead of taking a slot out of
my day's calendar for a call. I'm also aware that in a job search situation, the recruiter or hiring
manager will also want to assess your personality and how you talk and speak to them which can only be
assessed in a synchronous call or meeting and I get that. However, the real estate on my calendar is
getting more and more limited these days and I want to make sure it'll even be worth my time to have such a
synchronous interview later on through asynchronous means of gathering more information about the job first.
For example, I'd want to know if the technology I'll be working on is something I'm capable of or interested
in, the pay, the # of PTO days, the systems they have in place, etc. and these can all be found out without
having to jump on a call.

Comments

Commenter_2
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 30
First thing—don't accept any meeting invite unless it has a clear agenda. (Some exceptions of course. Eg.
Maybe an all hands on deck response to an emergent security incident.)

Method 1:

When you get the agenda, start an email thread off the agenda. Answer all the questions before the scheduled
meeting. Suggest canceling the meeting because it is no longer necessary.

Method 2:

When you get the agenda, respond to the effect of "based on the agenda, I don't think my presence is
required at this meeting", and give some plausible reason based on the content of the agenda.

Edit: this doesn't work as well for recruiters. For recruiters, you should just tell them that your current work commitments make it difficult to schedule a meeting, and you would prefer to discuss things by email for now.

Commenter_3
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7
For recruiters, I just don't answer. I only keep in touch with internal recruiters from companies that I'm interested in.

Commenter_2
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
+1

Don't bother with headhunters; internal recruiters only.

Commenter_4
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 11
Being a developer with ADHD I totally understand your situation. I prefer async communications as well.

Some people, however, much of the time stakeholders like to « talk on the phone » or « face to face » in zoom meetings even if the problem has been solved. They repeat what has been said over emails conversation. Once the real-time conversation is over they look satisfied.

Some people consider that an issue is not over until a real time communication has not been established.

I let them talk and enjoy the awkward silence.

Commenter_5
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 8
I've sentThis image to more than one person at work.

Commenter_6
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4
I like that image, and think it applies to many with ADHD even outside of programming.

I am probably lucky that I work at an organisation who actually puts effort in to ensuring people understand how to best work with others and helping people understand that personality types and neurodiversity both affect how people work and how they prefer to be communicated with, as well as what methods work best with different people and what does not.

We also separately had training on what the above image represented. That a 15 (or whatever) interruption to someone's work flow will have consequences to their efficiency and to consider if that "quick meeting" is worth that interruption.

Ultimately, what I'd say is the best way to let people know you prefer asynchronous communication methods is polite, but directly addressing it with those you work with.

Don't beat around the issue, don't drop hints. Tell them that the work you do works best with this communication method and that the quick meetings are counterproductive to your workflow, and ultimately result in followup that will need to be made via email or other methods. Explain to them that you're letting them know this because you simply want to ensure that you help them to your absolute best of your ability and that ultimately it benefits them as much as it does you.

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7
ask for an agenda for the meeting so you can be prepared.

when you have the agenda, you can decide to answer over email and remove his requests. or you can prepare for a meeting.

Commenter_7
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7
I've worked with people like this. One workaround if people aren't changing their habits is to just schedule yourself work blocks in your public calendar.

Commenter_8
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4
Not sure if this is a dick move or a pro strategy, but this is what I do:

Just reply to their request for the meeting with whatever information/question/requirements you have. So you basically just start communicating asynchronously. Then if you do still need to have a meeting, the stuff you said over the async medium sets a context or agenda.

I will say though-the synchronous parts of the interview process may not be negotiable, though you can ask about disability accommodations. A common strategy for job hunting is to allocate one or two days per week as your call days, and schedule all calls on those days. Do not give in to trying to fit more calls in, just put them all on those same days even if you have to schedule them farther out. That way you still have the other days to focus.

Commenter_9
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4
Dumb question, but did you try explaining it to them plainly? Do they know this a preference for you? Just tell them hey, so regarding meetings, due to my adhd I get into a flow state and disruptions like meetings that pop up can really have me lose momentum in my work, can this be an email instead?

Or, say something like, I've noticed that some times in meetings there are problems that come up that require a little more time for me to think about and solve, is there something that we can address via email instead of a meeting so I can think in this more?

Then email them Thank you for your understanding.

Sometimes people just don't know what works best for you

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3
[deleted]

   ###### Commenter_10
   ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
   A coworker of mine has dyslexia so they prefer face-to-face meetings for obvious reasons.

Commenter_11
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Had this new dev guy on our remote team who has trouble writing and reading in english. Ontop of that he seems to be lazy, avoids googling and hes not creative and needs precise instructions so he would get something done. Not less, no more . So for every small thing he wants a "quick call" which ends up into 20-30min call everytime where Im being put on the spot to read his code and give him advices.

I told him to push his code, first write to me and define the problem and tell me what hes trying to do, because I need time to digest everything and I need to checkout his branch and poke around the code. I cant just watch his screenshare and give him meaningful precise directions on the spot. And as you sad these 20min calls later might cost hours of productivity. Imagine trying to work in office when someone interrupts you hourly for 20-30min each time?

Anyways initially the guy was pissed and tried to guilt trip me but now 90% communication is done via messaging and I love it. Meanwile he found another victim ho has to talk him through solutions atleast one hour a day. Some people are just lazy manipulators man.

It is also annoying to give code reviews to this guy. I leave like 8 comments, he fixes 2 and starts spamming me that I should review whole MR. Did this a couple times and now I told him I will review when all comments are done and thats it. If he doesnt like it take up with the manager. No more problems :)

Commenter_12
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
It seems like an actual call is the way to go with recruiters. It seems the problem is you feel obligated to do more than your schedule allows. So just decide how many your schedule allows for per week, and what times are good for you for these. Then let them know this and that you are all booked up for now with other interviews.

Commenter_13
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
1) You're explaining something that everyone here goes through regularly, and you spent a long time doing it.

2) You're trying to 'apply' the concept as it relates to software development to applying for jobs, which is completely different.

3) I think you should take the "my time is too valuable for so-and-so" approach AFTER you've landed a job.

4) To purely answer the question (don't you just hate it when someone drags it out? ;)) talk on the phone the first time, and suggest email for subsequent comms. It's the industry norm for most comms.

Commenter_14
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
Have them send you a Loom and then respond with one.

Commenter_15
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
I have been dealing with this type of annoyance for awhile.

The way I skirt is either, schedule the meeting towards the end of my day, or ask for an agenda with clear points.

Once people start talking about the weather or other nonsense I'm wasting time.

Depending on your Org, I also join meetings when needed, and leave after I am not.

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Meaning if there is a 1 hour meeting, I will see on the agenda that I am to talk at point 6, I join say what I need to and leave. Any questions that arise you all can e-mail me.

Commenter_16
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
For recruiters, use Google scheduling. It costs like $7/month but definitely worth it during your interview process. You just reply to recruiters with your scheduling link. Calendly app is similar.

As for people at work, not sure how to persuade. You just have to be more upfront about your availability. If you're busy, say you are busy but free in half hour or whatever. If a meeting is running over time. Say you have to go and have a hard stop because deadlines or other tasks you had scheduled.

Now if you're just trying to avoid thinking on the spot. Get on the call, go over the issue and tell the person you're gonna have to look into it because it will take time. Let them know you don't want to waste their time but that you'll get back to them soon. That's what I do when it's not trivial and I'm gonna have to read some code I've never looked at it.

Overall I recommend being more transparent about these impromptu calls. Say "I'm busy" or that you can't. Or ask them to schedule something.

Commenter_17
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: -2
Just make the person feel super uncomfortable (if that's feasible, depending on the position the other person holds in the company) during the meeting. Make them want to actively avoid you.

   ###### Commenter_13
   ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5
   I must remember to never work with you.