

Title:

How to Protect Your Boss From Bad Meetings

Word Count:

592

Summary:

If you are an administrative assistant, you can help your boss by making sure attending a meeting makes sense. Here's what to do.

Keywords:

effective meetings, bad meetings, business meeting, facilitation, steve kaye, facilitator, leadership, one great meeting

Article Body:

Most bosses spend too much of their time in meetings. This happens because executives respond to problems by calling meetings to fix them. And when the meetings fail to produce results, they call more meetings. In some companies, people have even called meetings to figure out why their meetings didn't work.

Rather than watch your boss trudge off to an endless schedule of meetings, here are things you can do to protect your boss's valuable time.

1) When someone calls to schedule a meeting for your boss, ask for the agenda. If there is no agenda, check if your boss wants to attend. Lack of an agenda is the number one cause of bad meetings. Ideally, your boss would insist on having an agenda because time is money.

If the caller replies that your boss will receive an agenda at the meeting, state that your boss wants to see the agenda at least a day before the meeting. This gives your boss time to prepare and avoids being ambushed by surprises.

2) Ask "What are the goals for this meeting?" or "What results do you want to have by the end of the meeting?" A meeting without goals will lack direction, which can be as deadly as no agenda.

3) Ask "What is my boss's role in the meeting?" or "Why do you want my boss to attend?" Many junior employees invite executives to their meetings because it makes them seem important. They also use this as an opportunity to delegate work upwards, show off, and ask their boss to make decisions. Vague replies (such as, "Oh, we just want hear what your boss has to say") suggest lazy planning.

If your boss is being invited to "find out what everyone is doing" check if your boss would prefer to receive a copy of the minutes instead. It takes much less time to read minutes than attend a meeting.

If your boss has an important role in a minor part of a meeting, ask if your boss can attend only that part of the meeting. Suggest that they schedule your boss' participation at the beginning so your boss can be on time for this part and then leave after contributing.

4) Ask "How should my boss prepare for the meeting?" This helps your boss do well and avoids being surprised. If the preparation requires extensive work, check with your boss if the schedule makes sense. Also, check if others will be prepared. Unprepared participants always waste time. If necessary, revise the scope of the meeting or schedule it for a later date to allow adequate preparation.

5) Ask "What should my boss bring?" You want to make sure that your boss has whatever is needed for effective participation. You also want to know what is needed because you may have to help obtain it. If the resources are unavailable, suggest alternatives.

6) Ask who else will be there. This will help your boss anticipate what might happen. And in some cases you may find it useful to call some of the other participants to survey their expectations, concerns, and support for the issues on the agenda.

7) Finally, make sure that you collect details such as the starting time, duration, and location. Obtain a map and directions when needed.

As an administrative assistant you work as an important partner with your boss. Thus, you may want to share this article and use it as the basis for how you can work together, making sure that your boss attends the right meetings for the right reasons with the right preparation.