

Title:

How to Protect Yourself from Meetings

Word Count:

334

Summary:

Rather than trudge off to every and any meeting that pops up on your calendar, here's how to protect your time.

Keywords:

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

Article Body:

You just checked your computer and (surprise) someone has scheduled you for a meeting.

Now what? You had planned to work on a project - and this meeting promises to be a repeat of the last one, which was a long painful discussion of unrelated ideas, stories, and complaints.

Instead of just showing up, you could:

1) Be busy.

Fill your calendar with activities that relate to your job. For example, you could schedule an all-day meeting tomorrow (with yourself) to finish the report that is due next week. Or, you could schedule a trip (to the library) to read articles on new technologies. Or, you could schedule meetings (essential conversations) with team members to learn about their needs so that you can manage resources.

Now you have an excuse to miss bad meetings. You can say, "I have a conflict."

2) Be curious.

Ask questions to determine if attending the meeting is a good use of your time. For example, you could ask:

"What is your goal for the meeting?"

"What is your agenda for the meeting?"

"What is my role in the meeting?"

Certainly your time is too valuable to waste in pointless, unplanned, useless meetings. In such cases, use decline the invitation or offer to help.

3) Be helpful.

If you're invited to a meeting about an important issue and there is no agenda, offer to prepare one.

This gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your leadership and organizational skills. It also helps accomplish tasks that are needed for your business.

If you are too busy to help, then hire a facilitator who will take care of the entire process.

And, if appropriate, you can offer to take charge of a meeting that has lost its way. Of course, this will depend upon the goal, the group, and your knowledge of process tools.

4) Be constructive (bonus idea)

Instead of coping with bad meetings, schedule a workshop that shows your staff how to hold effective meetings. Learn more about meetings at:
<http://www.squidoo.com/OneGreatMeeting>