

It's Time to Change How Internal Meetings Are Managed

Covid-19 singlehandedly pushed remote and hybrid meetings into the mainstream, causing their numbers to soar. New meeting management style and etiquette are required to make them productive.

By **Ron Shinkman** | September 30, 2025



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It is a truism that Covid-19 remade how offices operate. And while discussion on its fallout has focused on remote work, return-to-office mandates and even so-called hush trips, little has been said about how one of the most common staples of corporate life has morphed: The internal meeting.

Remote meetings are now commonplace, as the ubiquity of platforms like **Zoom** and **Microsoft Teams** for remote conferencing make scheduling them quick and easy.

Archie, a company that designs and distributes software for office management, estimates that the number of corporate meetings has tripled since 2020. The number of employees invited to meetings has also soared. According to data gleaned by Microsoft from its Teams platform, confabs with 65 or more attendees are the fastest-growing kind of meeting in corporate America today.

And as the ranks of attendees increase, so does meetings' tendency toward becoming unproductive, if not demoralizing.

According to Microsoft, 57% of meetings are called ad hoc without a calendar invite, with one in 10 booked at the very last minute. And more than 30% of meetings span multiple time zones, making it challenging to ensure everyone can participate equally. Too many of such meetings can fatigue employees and damage their morale, workplace experts say.

"Meetings are where culture comes to life, for better or worse," said **Preston Poore**, a former high-ranking executive with **Coca-Cola** and **Hershey's** who is now an Atlanta-based executive coach. "They are the stage where leaders signal whether people matter, whether voices count, and whether time is respected. They are also where trust is built — or chipped away."

There is also a generational conflict between younger and older employees over meetings.

"Office culture, which encompasses how people interact, is being significantly impacted by differences in what different generations — and ranks within a management line — perceive the purpose and function of meetings and technology to be," said **Sean Schofield**, assistant vice president of life and career design at **Wheaton College** in Norton, Mass.

In the insurance sector, remote meetings appear to be more common than in other corporate settings, according to **Dominique Camacho Moran**, a labor attorney and partner in the New York City law firm **Farrell Fritz**, which works closely with insurers.

"I noticed that when we talk to carriers and insurance people, they frequently are remote working, far more than I see in other businesses," she said. User-friendly platforms such as Teams "make it so much easier to hit the video call button than it is to go ahead and type out a chat."

What insurers specifically are doing to address their meeting culture and organization is unclear. Eight carriers in the health, P&C and life spaces contacted for this article either did not respond to a request seeking comment or said they would look into it but did not provide a response.

The biggest challenge: Hybrid meetings

Perhaps the biggest issue for managers is ensuring the productivity of hybrid meetings, when some employees are conferring in person and others are videoing or calling in. The hybrid meeting was savagely lampooned in the 2024 Broadway play "Eureka Day," when the in-person participants' discussion of a mumps outbreak is eclipsed by increasingly snarky comments posted by online attendees. It eventually leads to the panicked in-person attendees slamming shut the laptop hosting the meeting.

Such issues can also occur in real life. "That blend often magnifies disconnects — people interrupt, speak over muted screens, or mentally drift because the format lacks structure," said **Nick Bach**, a psychologist who practices in Louisville, Ky.

Employee behavior during meetings these days can provide some insights to their managers about how engaged they are with work. For example, data compiled by **Vyopta**, a unit of **Hewlett-Packard**, found that employees who consistently keep their cameras off during meetings are nearly twice as likely to leave the company within a year as those who keep their cameras on more consistently.

That may give leadership some idea of who on their team is on board, but experts say that since meetings have evolved into a wholly new format, new meeting rules must follow.

New meeting etiquette for a new age

Workplace experts recommended several approaches to make meetings less unwieldy and more engaging and productive:

- 1. Design meetings with specific purpose and intentionality.** "It really comes down to the leaders fully embracing their role as a steward of others' time," said **Steven Rogelberg**, a professor at the **University of North Carolina at Charlotte** and founder of its organizational science program. "Stewardship basically boils down to the thought that the idea of people leaving your meeting saying it was a waste of time is so uncomfortable to you that you become intentional with your meeting choices." He suggested structuring meetings not as topics to be presented, but as questions presumed to come from participants to be answered. "If you don't have any questions (that come to mind), you probably don't need a meeting," he said.
- 2. Pare your participant list down to only the most necessary participants and set time limits.** Many employees spend significant portions of their day sliding from meeting to meeting, and some of those may not be necessary. Freeing employees from some of those less-critical confabs or at least giving them a specific idea of how long they will last can make them more active participants and improve productivity and morale.
- 3. Set policies for all participants.** A consistent policy should be in place regarding the use of cameras — either on or off. If on-camera is mandatory, participants should be dressed and groomed appropriately, particularly if a meeting is taking place during their employer's normal business hours. They should also have an appropriate video background. "I'm not interested in seeing your lingerie hanging. I don't want to see

your vacation pictures that may not be appropriate," attorney Camacho Moran noted. If the right background isn't achievable, blurring should be mandatory.

- 4. Meeting organizers should express positivity to kick off a meeting.** "People feel more welcomed into the meeting when a leader expresses gratitude for their attendance," Rogelberg said. "When meetings are occurring with a more positive mood, individuals tend to listen to one another more and disagree with one another more constructively."

How meetings are conducted will continue to evolve with technology. But managers should never lose focus on how information is communicated to their reports and how they respond, executive coach Poore noted.

"The culture you build in your meetings is the culture your people will live with colleagues and clients," he said.

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