



## Project Team Meetings: Get More Done in Half the Time!

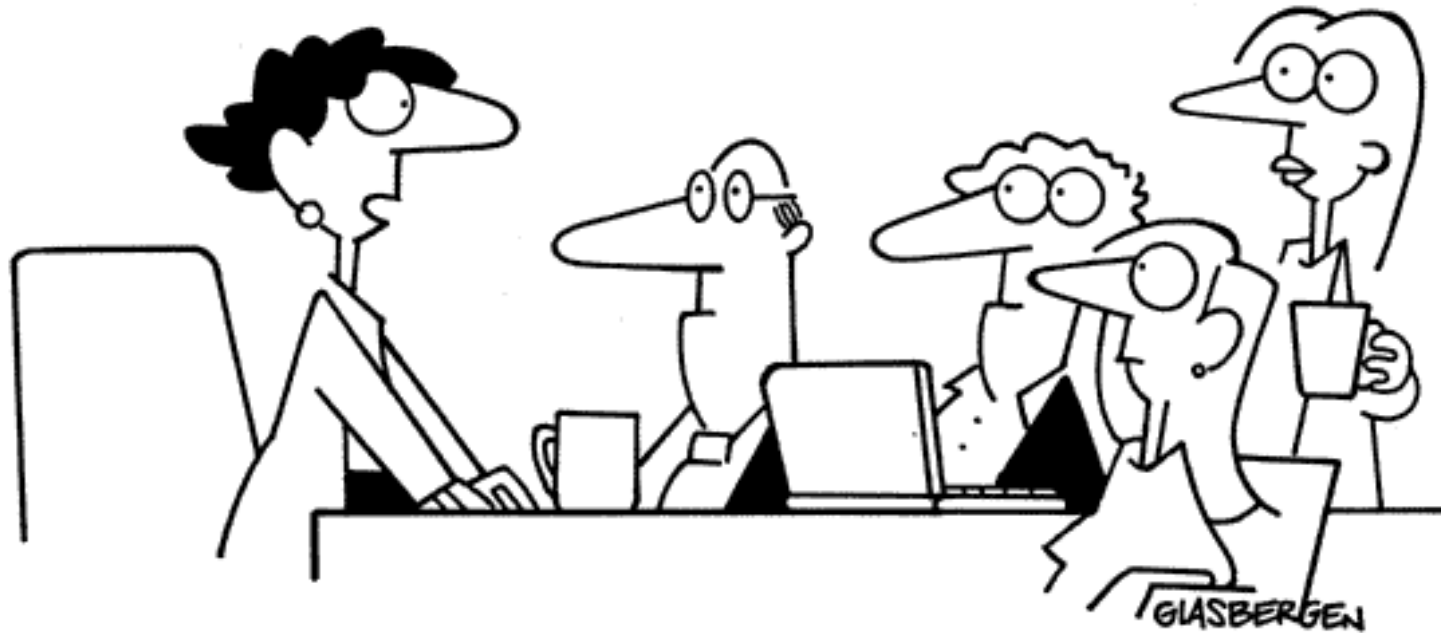
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***“Sometimes I get the feeling that the two biggest problems in America today are making ends meet --- and making meetings end.”***

***Robert Orben***



**"A motion has been made and seconded that this be one of those meetings where nothing actually gets done."**

## Key Learning Objectives

- **Explore common meeting pitfalls**
- **Describe specific facilitation techniques for getting your meeting “back on track”**
- **Identify tips for reducing meeting time and increasing meeting productivity**

## Participant Activity

- **Identify a group leader**
- **Individually, write (on post its) your top 2 meeting challenges**
- **As a group, share your individual ideas, then select the group's top 3**
- **List your group's top 3 challenges on your flip chart**

# Have You Ever Experienced...

## 1. The "Lost in Space" Meeting

***"Why am I here?"***      ***"What are we doing?"***



## Signs you might be "*Lost in Space*"...

- Participants don't know why they were invited
- There are no written objectives or agenda
- Meeting deliverables aren't clear
- Meeting seems unplanned

## How to fix it...

- Don't call a meeting if it's not necessary
- Write clear meeting objectives
- Communicate clear expectations prior to the meeting
- Circulate an agenda with specific deliverables

## Have You Ever Experienced...

1. The "Lost in Space" Meeting
2. The "Rat Trap" Meeting

***"We're all over the place?"***

## Signs you might be in a “Rat Trap”...

- Conversation strays off topic
- Participants get bogged down in trivial conversations

## How to fix it...

- Assign someone to “raise the flag” when we’re getting off topic
- Use an egg timer to “time box” detailed discussion
- Question if issue can be taken offline
- Redirect issue to parking lot
- Use stuffed ELMO (**E**veryone **L**et’s **M**ove **O**n)

## Have You Ever Experienced...

1. The "Lost in Space" Meeting
2. The "Rat Trap" Meeting
3. The "Deja Vu" Meeting

***"Didn't we already talk about this?"***

## Signs you might be in a “*Deja Vu*” Meeting...

- Meetings seem to cover the same issues over and over
- Action items seem to “fall through the cracks”

## How to fix it...

- Use blind round robin technique to gather feedback efficiently
- Write all actions on a flip chart in real time
- Ask owner to confirm wording and suggest due date
- Maintain an action item database
- Open all status meetings with an action item review
- Use electronic reminders for action items
- Discuss importance/consequences for missed action items during kickoff
- Address repeated offenders individually – ask why first

## Have You Ever Experienced...

1. The "Lost in Space" Meeting
2. The "Rat Trap" Meeting
3. The "Deja Vu" Meeting
4. The "Emperor Has No Clothes" Meeting

***"Yea, we think that's a great idea?"***

## Signs you might be in an “*Emperor Has No Clothes*” Meeting...

- Team leader thinks all is great
- People don't speak up in the meeting

## How to fix it...

- Debrief your meetings (especially early on)
- Conduct blind post it feedback at end of kickoff
- Suggest taboo topics
- Reward bold behavior
- Demonstrate risk taking as project manager
- Socialize with team members

## Have You Ever Experienced...

1. The "Lost in Space" Meeting
2. The "Rat Trap" Meeting
3. The "Deja Vu" Meeting
4. The "Emperor Has No Clothes" Meeting
5. The "Boot Camp" Meeting

***"This is a nightmare!"***

## Signs you might be in a “*Boot Camp*” Meeting...

- Everyone feels beat down and discouraged
- Meetings aren't fun in any way

## How to fix it...

- Incorporate opportunities for team members to get to know each other
- Recognize individual team member accomplishments
- Encourage peer recognition
- Use ice breakers
- Incorporate stretch breaks
- Motivate the team by emphasizing importance of effort and accomplishments to date
- Use non-traditional meeting settings
- Solicit team input on meeting times/durations
- Have food!!!

## Have You Ever Experienced...

1. The "Lost in Space" Meeting
2. The "Rat Trap" Meeting
3. The "Deja Vu" Meeting
4. The "Emperor Has No Clothes" Meeting
5. The "Boot Camp" Meeting
6. The "Lack of Preparation" Meeting

***"I didn't have a chance to read the documents, but I'm here!"***

## **Signs you might be in a “*Lack of Preparation*” Meeting...**

- **Participants show up unprepared**
- **Too much time is spent reviewing “homework” documents**

## **How to fix it...**

- **Give participants sufficient time to review documents**
- **Ask participants to submit questions/comments 1-3 days prior to the meeting**
- **Ask participants to lead sections of the meeting**
- **Develop ground rules around preparation – and sign them!**
- **Get team buy in on “sanctions” for unprepared members**