

## HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE

### Short and sweet's the way to meet

Forty hours seems plenty of time to get work done, until you factor in endless meetings.

Here's how to make meetings work for you.

#### **Make meetings action-oriented**

While brainstorm and think tank-style meetings have their place, you'll want your meetings to be action-oriented. Use an agenda, even for informal meetings, and try to stay on topic. If conversations get complicated or engage only a small number of participants, encourage those involved to continue the meeting later, rather than have everyone wait.

**Stick to time limits** People work better in short, focused bursts, so try to keep your meetings to 30-60 minutes. A short, active meeting in which things are solved, shared or celebrated is far more effective than a long-winded experience that leaves everyone dying to get out of there.

#### **Don't put off regular meetings**

While there's no point meeting for the sake of it, it's tempting to bump regular meetings so often that they never happen. Don't cancel them; just keep them short and focused. After all, you decided in less-stressed times they were worthwhile.

**Consider using the phone** Do you even need a meeting? Maybe a quick phone conversation will do, especially if you want to look at an online document or website while you chat.

**Try standing up** The adage holds true: fast meetings are good meetings. And they are never faster than when everyone is standing. Remove chairs and the temptation to waffle or get distracted by side topics magically vanishes.

SUE WHITE

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