



SMARTER IN AN HOUR

# DON'T WASTE MY TIME

*BONUS TOOLS*



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## MEETING PLANNING HACKS

Applying the PLANNER framework introduced in the first chapter will set you and your meetings apart, enabling you to run effective meetings every time. As you use the model to plan your meetings, be sure to:

- ❑ Share responsibilities among all meeting participants.
- ❑ Rotate responsibilities among meeting participants in standing meetings to avoid complacency.
- ❑ Assign the same responsibilities to meeting participants in a series of meetings to maintain consistency and streamline functions.
- ❑ Draft meeting outcomes so that large goals are broken down into their component parts—enabling you to track and acknowledge the group's progress at regular intervals and maintain group momentum.
- ❑ Rearrange the meeting space to be conducive to the meeting's purpose.
- ❑ Plan seating arrangements to manage participant dynamics.
- ❑ Clarify expectations before the meeting and again at its start.
- ❑ Communicate early and clearly with meeting invitees.

Because communicating early and clearly is critical to setting up your meeting to be successful, here are some phrases to integrate into your pre-meeting conversations and emails:

- ❑ “The reason I am asking you to join the meeting is to share your experience with...”
- ❑ “Your role in the meeting, if you agree, will be to...”
- ❑ “Your expertise in X will be essential to our achieving the meeting's goal.”
- ❑ “Please review the attached agenda and arrive prepared to...in support of it.”
- ❑ “Since we will be developing the project timeline, please ensure access to your complete calendar during the meeting.”
- ❑ “We will begin promptly at X and end on time at X.”
- ❑ “I respectfully request that you not send a representative in your place without contacting me first.”
- ❑ “To ensure our time is productive, I am asking each of you to dedicate 20 minutes of preparation time to the following actions...”
- ❑ “We will open the meeting with X; please arrive ready to share your Y.”

*To maximize your use of this bonus content, read Chapters 1 and 3 in Don't Waste My Time.*

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## HACKS TO LEVERAGE YOUR MEETING AGENDA

In Chapters 1 and 2, you saw that setting expectations for meeting participants and communicating them are critical to your meeting success. Here are phrases you can use during your meeting to keep your agenda at the forefront and to reiterate the meeting's purpose and processes:

- “I'd like to thank each of you for confirming your receipt and review of the agenda earlier this week.”
- “Here are copies of the agenda to refer to so that we stay on focus.”
- “The purpose of the meeting will be to accomplish these X outcomes: [specify the outcomes].”
- “We have allocated X minutes to accomplish [state the meeting outcome].”
- “For the next X minutes, our task is to [specify the agenda item]. Here is how we will get there: [explain the process].”
- “If we can wrap up this discussion in the next few minutes, we will stay on track for ending the meeting on time.”

Complement the language you use with the following actions, as appropriate. They will subtly elevate the significance and role of your agenda in the meeting:

- Bring printed copies of the agenda to distribute in the meeting.
- Hold a copy of agenda in your hand when transitioning from one agenda item to the next.
- Look at your copy of the agenda when referencing it.
- Mark off agenda items on your printed copy as they are completed.
- Acknowledge to the meeting participants what you are writing on it.
- Place your marked-up copy of the agenda in your project folder as you close the meeting, which can signal its importance to the group's work—do not fold it in half, throw it away, or leave it behind in the presence of others.

*To maximize your use of this bonus content, review the “PLANNER: Expectations” section in Chapter 1 as well as Chapter 2 in Don't Waste My Time.*

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## HACKS TO PROACTIVELY PREVENT MEETING CHALLENGES

The sage advice of Chapter 3 was this: The easiest challenges to resolve are the ones you prevent. Use the strategies and phrases below to get ahead of disruptions. These proactive behaviors and phrases will complement the book's 50+ strategies related to seating arrangements, charts, and openings.

- Respond to participants who notify you that they will arrive late with: “Knowing you will be running late, please share your input on the first two agenda items with me now, so I can include your ideas during the meeting.”
- Warmly welcome individual members upon their arrival—begin building positive relationship immediately.
- Leverage name tents’ real estate by asking participants to add relevant information, such as their role on the team, a skill they bring, resources they can access, and so on—you can draw on this information to manage challenges later.
- Lead the meeting standing and from multiple positions in the room—making it easier to manage undesired behaviors that arise.
- Refer to the agenda regularly during the meeting to remain on task and follow your plan. Adhere to the established behavior guidelines you charted—model the desired behavior and hold others accountable to do the same.
- If the group’s level of commitment is *low*, highlight their accomplishments—from the displayed agreements chart—to enhance motivation.
- If the group’s level of commitment is *high*, use your agenda’s meeting outcomes to keep participants focused on what remains to be accomplished.
- Stay attuned to shifting group dynamics and address them quickly—refer to your guidelines chart, adjust seating using one of the four methods detailed in Chapter 3, or consider taking a break and addressing the behavior directly and privately.
- Integrate some of these phrases throughout your meeting:
  - “Thank you for making this a priority and coming today.”
  - “I prepared today’s agenda to ensure a productive meeting.”
  - “You can see, on the agenda, our next item is X.”
  - “Based on the agenda, we have X minutes allocated to accomplish this item.”
  - “Good news...we are on schedule to finish on time or early—let’s maintain this pace.”
  - “As listed on the agenda, [name] will be leading this item for us.”
  - “Your focused efforts to achieve our outcomes today were appreciated. Thank you.”

*To maximize your use of this bonus content, review Chapter 3 in Don't Waste My Time.*