



Did You Iron Your Zoom Shirt?

Ever wake up and breathe a sigh of relief anticipating a wide-open calendar for the day, only to go online and find that appointments have been added overnight? Ugh!

Yup, that was my husband's experience earlier this week. He went from "hot dog, no meeting" mode to "gotta iron my Zoom shirt" mode in the blink of an eye. The sad thing was that he wasn't really even sure of the reason for the late-breaking calendar blip. Nonetheless, meet he would do.

Meetings...a necessary evil? I think the answer to that one is decided case by case.

Let's explore just that—the issue of meetings—in this edition of *EA Insights*. Sometimes it really does make sense to convene. And, other times, well....

So, keep reading! Here's hoping this month's article leads you to a better grasp on when to iron that Zoom shirt or when to leave it in the closet and just shoot off a note.

All the best,

June

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Meetings: A Necessary Evil?

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Meetings have been the bane of many people's existence for years. With COVID, though, a lot of folks have been lamenting about a dramatic increase in the meeting schedule. The reasons for the rise in invites aren't necessarily clear, though. It may be an effort to maintain some semblance of connection for work teams that suddenly have been forced apart. On the other hand, it may be a way to keep tabs on the progress and productivity of colleagues who now are out of eyesight.

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Quotes

"A typical day for me involves a lot of meetings."

~Sophia Amoruso

"If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be 'meetings.'"

~Dave Barry

"Meetings with no goal, also known as 'coffee shop' meetings, can be huge time wasters if you're not efficient with them. 'Always know why you're meeting, and make sure it's important[.]'"

~David Cohen

"Meetings should be like salt - a spice sprinkled carefully to enhance a dish, not poured recklessly over every forkful. Too much salt destroys a dish. Too many meetings destroy morale and motivation."

~Jason Fried

"As a leader, you must consistently drive effective communication. Meetings must be deliberate and intentional - your organizational rhythm should value purpose over habit and effectiveness over efficiency."

~Chris Fussell

"The majority of meetings should be

Not to diminish the importance of remaining connected to colleagues or tracking status, but meetings aren't always the cure. In fact, a constant string of meetings—especially those with questionable purpose—may have more of a negative impact than a positive one on the underlying goals.

To meet, or not to meet, that really *IS* the question!

How do you decide when it's time to gather—in-person, online, or by phone? I'd offer four instances when a meeting may be favored over letting your fingers do the talking via email or text.

MEET when teambuilding is on the agenda.

Some types of exchanges just don't lend themselves to the typed word. Teambuilding is one such example. When there is a need to help a group jell, to learn more about each other, to develop connections, that is the time for a get-together. Convening people permits opportunities for interaction and observation that are much more difficult to accomplish through strictly written communication.

MEET when decision making or information sharing would benefit from conversation.

Sometimes there's just a need to talk out a topic. That can be the case when a decision is in the offing or when information is to be shared. Certainly, the bottom line could be relayed in writing...period. However, at times, the real fruit is in the conversation—the give-and-take to inform decision making or to facilitate and/or confirm understanding of the shared information. Again, thoroughly written input or explanations could be offered, but sometimes having a face-to-face or, at least, a voice-to-voice is the best way to convey a message.

MEET when grasping the nonverbals is essential.

Speaking of face-to-face or voice-to-voice, keep the option of a meeting open for those situations in which words alone are not enough. Sometimes, people need to hear your tone, see your face...and you theirs. In these instances, the guessing game of email or text emotion, which often is guessed incorrectly, can be abbreviated and significantly improved by simply coming together for a conversation.

MEET when doing so would avoid extended back-and-forth messaging.

Although folks tend to peg meetings as time-wasters, an even bigger time-waster can be a string of messages—back-and-forth throughout the day or even longer, especially when multiple people are in the thread.

- "I don't understand."
- "You're not responding to the latest message."
- "Good grief, why is X writing a tome?"
- "Please read. That was covered in the second message!"
- "Ping, ping, ping...I can't concentrate...I'd mute this thread if I could!"

Yes, if a quick note exchange will do the trick, then by all means, do it! However, if you're moving beyond message two or three, it's probably time to pick up the phone or arrange a quick face-to-face. You may be able to handle in 5 – 10 minutes what otherwise might disrupt a whole day through messaging.

Meeting, at strategic times and in targeted ways, can help you and your team to get much done. Planning effective sessions, however, isn't always easy. For assistance, reach out to us at [Executive Advantage](#). We are here to help you devise approaches for when, and how, you meet in order to maximize productivity. [Contact us today](#).

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discussions that lead to decisions."

~Patrick Lencioni

"We're always working on our communication, which is something that's important. [W]e will sit down and have meetings about things. That's a process. And you have to be able to be honest with each other as much as you can."

~Mike McCready

"I don't need to spend hours in meetings, because I can have a two-minute conversation with a colleague who is pretty ... smart and who knows how to get the job done. And, if he needs my help on something, he'll let me know."

~Sandra E. Peterson

"Know when to email vs. when to meet. Logistics are best handled over a non-immediate communication channel like email...."

Detailed status meetings will suck the life out of your day."

~Justin Rosenstein

"People who enjoy meetings should not be in charge of anything."

~Thomas Sowell

"I think it was one of the better meetings ... with those guys, because I was honestly able to say everything I wanted to say..... So, from that point on, I thought all of that was behind us."

~Latrell Sprewell

"[T]eam or project meetings, set up to coordinate individual activities... just popped up in my calendar by the dozen."

~Sebastian Thrun

About Executive Advantage

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