

## *Unnecessary Meetings Video Transcript*

- The first question we need to ask with any meeting is, do we need to have it at all? Maybe someone is worried about making a decision on their own. Or it's a regular meeting that's just become a habit and has outgrown its usefulness. Maybe everyone just assumes we need the meeting and nobody has questioned it. Or maybe the leader of the meeting likes running it because it makes them feel important. It's costing us a considerable amount of time and therefore money and yet nobody has thought about or dared to stand up and say, do we really need to be doing this? So the options are, just to ax the meeting and never have it again. Or make the meeting great. Or to slowly run it down and discontinue it. Clearly just axing it is the quickest and easiest option, if you can do that without upsetting people too much. Ask yourself, if you didn't organize the next one and the regular meeting just disappeared, would anyone notice? Would anyone mind? Would it matter? If there are some good bits within the meeting then it would be better to save it, but if it has no redeeming features at all, then it's got to go.

The way to make the meeting great would be to think about redesigning it. And I think, *there are three parts to this.*

**First**, what are the repeating items, where progress never seems to get made? Could we focus on just one of those each time and attack it, spending all of the meeting on just that one?

**Second**, if the meeting is bogged down by too many large problems, could we break the meeting up and give out projects to teams of people to work on outside the meeting and report back? This takes the pressure off and a lot more work can get done on the problem than just the time we have for the meeting. Then it becomes a reporting meeting rather than a problem-solving meeting.

**Third**, could we, or should we, slowly drift the meeting to a more interesting subject? For example, from checking on progress to improving our processes. From people just reporting on sales or production to coming up with ideas about how we could sell more or improve quality. This would be changing the meeting from a reporting meeting to a problem-solving meeting.

But if the meeting can't be made great, and for political reasons, you can't just ax it, *here are five ways to slowly run it down.*

**First**, invite fewer people, bit by bit, so that the numbers dwindle. In fact, this may revitalize the meeting because the smaller one will have a different and probably more dynamic feel.

**Second**, is to have fewer agenda items so the meeting gets shorter and shorter over time. Perhaps some of your agenda items could be migrated across to a different meeting somewhere else so yours can get smaller. Perhaps some could just be quietly dropped from the agenda. But if you go for this one, you do have to make sure that the meeting is shortened as well, otherwise, the fewer items might just expand to fill the time available.

**Third**, is to go quicker. Allocate less time to the meeting and keep to the agenda so you waste less and less time on the meeting. This would combine well with having fewer people and fewer agenda items.

**Fourth**, is to meet less often. Make it weekly instead of daily, then fortnightly, then monthly, then eventually quarterly to the point where you could stop the meeting and nobody would notice.

**The fifth** is to do more outside the meeting. Delegate more and more of it to teams to work on outside of the meeting to the point where either the issues get resolved or the teams don't need the meeting to chase them to do the things which are their jobs anyway.

**So for your worst meeting, I'd like you to ask yourself, could the meeting just be axed? Or if not, could it be either improved or slowly phased out? Use the notetaking tool to answer these questions.**