

Guide

The Hidden Costs of Ineffective Meetings:

Challenges & Strategies for Maximizing Collective Performance



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Executive Summary

According to the Microsoft World Trade Index 2022, the number of business meetings has quadrupled in two years, highlighting their essential role, but also their inefficiency in many organizations.

These inefficient meetings translate into visible costs (lost time, lower productivity, budgets), as well as hidden costs: frustration, disengagement and inertia in decision-making. On average, an employee attends 8 meetings a week, and this figure doubles for senior executives. Against this backdrop, 80% of workers believe they would be more productive with fewer meetings.

To reduce the costs of meetings, rather than seeking to eliminate them altogether, you need to rethink their structure in depth. There are effective solutions to help you create a meeting space that offers your participants a fluid and engaging experience. For example, Klaxoon's all-in-one platform offers interactive and collaborative tools that centralize information shared in meetings, facilitate synchronous and asynchronous communication, and speed up decision-making, whether in person or remotely.

By deploying the full power of your collaborative workspace, your meetings become performance vectors, not obstacles. Participants are well-informed and actively involved, and the move to action comes naturally.

In 2022, Microsoft made a striking observation in its World Trade Index: in the space of two years, **the number of corporate meetings has increased 4-fold**.



In 2 years, the number of corporate meetings has increased 4-fold

Source: Microsoft World Trade Index

This confirms the central place that meetings have always occupied in all organizations. The problem is that meetings as we know them are far from efficient. **They generate numerous costs** that impact team productivity, the quality of ideas exchanged, and the quality of decision-making.

In this guide, we're going to identify the visible and hidden costs of all those meetings you find inefficient. Then, we will look at the best solutions for offering your participants a satisfying meeting space that will keep them engaged and effective in decision-making, in meetings and beyond.



Participant engagement is a decisive factor in the effectiveness of a meeting, whether on-site or remotely.

1.

Ineffective meetings: visible and hidden costs

Ineffective meetings: visible and hidden costs

Ineffective meetings can generate two types of costs:

- Visible costs
- Hidden costs

Visible costs are those that are directly perceptible to the organization: costs in terms of time, productivity, and even the financial costs to the company.

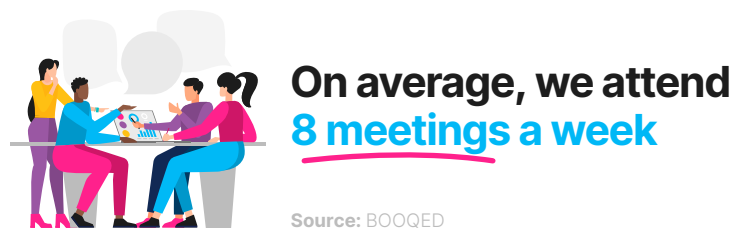
Conversely, **hidden costs** are costs that are often neglected by organizations, but whose impact is just as significant as that of visible costs. It's important to be able to identify them in your own meetings, as **they normalize certain harmful behaviors** which in turn lead to frustration, misunderstanding and poor or little decision-making.

The visible costs of meetings

Time

When you think of ineffective meetings, the first thing that springs to mind is **the time you spend in them** - the notorious "meetingitis". Many of us work to the rhythm of one meeting after another, especially those in the knowledge economy (which is essentially focused on the service sector).

On average, **we attend 8 meetings a week**, and this figure can double for senior executives. According to MIT, they can spend up to **23 hours a week in meetings** - half their working time!



But are all these meetings essential? Not necessarily, since in many cases their content could be as simple **as an email or an asynchronously shared document**.

Productivity

The second visible cost of inefficient meetings is productivity. Another impressive figure: no less than 80% of employees believe they would be more productive if they spent less time in meetings! The reason is simple: it takes up their working time and prevents them from making progress on their other priorities. As a result, **they have to find other times to do it**, including on their own time.

80% of employees believe they would be **more productive** if they spent less time in meetings

Source :Atlassian

This is how **overtime and multitasking** become systematic. It's not uncommon to be dealing with e-mails or replying to colleagues via chat, while listening with a distracted ear to the meeting in progress. This has a double impact on productivity, both in terms of ancillary tasks and the meeting itself.

Budgets

The impact of inefficient meetings is also directly reflected in your organization's budgets. To best estimate **the financial cost of your meetings**, several factors need to be taken into account:

Meeting format

Do you want to hold face-to-face meetings? If so, you'll need to factor in logistical costs:

- Room rental ;
- Accommodation ;
- Transportation (and its carbon footprint),...

For this reason, many companies now prefer **hybrid meetings**, except when travel is necessary and justified. What's more, they are also increasingly mindful of their impact on the environment.

To enhance the hybrid meeting experience, **meeting room equipment** has also recently undergone significant evolution: video, interactive screens, connection speeds, etc. Whatever the context, **a remote alternative** must always be available to enable potential participants to join the meeting from anywhere.

Number of participants

Another important point is that the greater the number of people invited to the meeting, the higher the cost. This is because the participants are being asked to attend on their own time, **so their individual remuneration must be taken into account**.

For a more accurate estimate of the cost of your meetings taking this parameter into account, you can use [our online estimator](#).

Mobilizing participants

This is a loss of revenue generated by the time spent in meetings. It's time that participants don't spend **on activities that could contribute to the company's development**.

For example, a salesperson won't sell as long as he or she is taking part in in-house meetings. In the case of face-to-face meetings, the time spent traveling to the meeting site is not always worthwhile, either.

The hidden costs of meetings

More pressure on teams

The result is that teams overstretched by ineffective meetings burn out, and are more exposed to long-term work overload.

According to Microsoft, 37% of workers at all hierarchical levels feel that their companies are asking too much of them today. These pressure levels can have a direct impact on their well-being at work, and **lead to higher team turnover**.

Disengaged participants

Less effective meetings also lead to **a loss of overall engagement**, which can translate into presenteeism. People go to meetings for the sake of going to meetings, while realizing that there is no real added value in being there. What's more, few participants dare refuse an invitation to a meeting for fear of being frowned upon, knowing full well that they'll be more observers than real contributors.

Some people are therefore systematically favored over others in terms of their ability to express themselves and get involved in the meeting:

- The most extroverted personalities who are comfortable speaking;
- Face-to-face participants when remote participants are in the minority, etc.

This leads to situations **where only a few monopolize the floor**, while the more introverted, remote participants or those who prefer to express themselves in writing are left in the background. In the long run, this lack of commitment can generate a great deal of frustration.

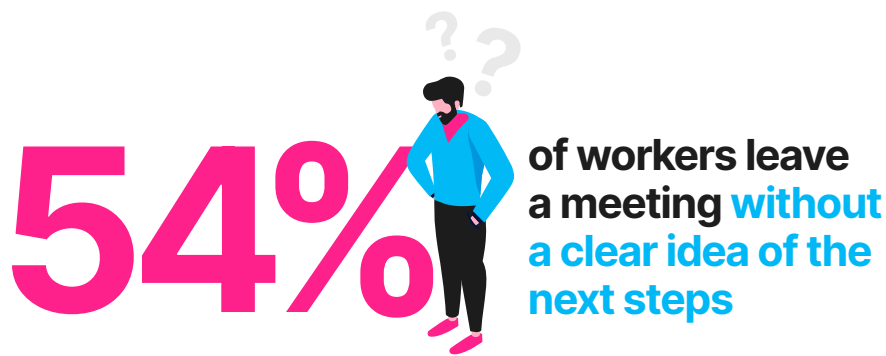


Regardless of the context, meeting engagement is closely related to participants' ability to express themselves. Consider an inclusive approach that values contributions beyond the verbal, such as visual challenges or silent brainstorming.

Steven Rogelberg, Ph.D., best-selling author of The Surprising Science of Meetings

Inertia in decision-making

Ineffective meetings that lack focus and clear objectives reduce the scope for action. Some participants multitask, others don't dare intervene, others are already looking ahead to their next meeting... The result is **a succession of meetings leading to further meetings**, with no real decision-making. As a result, more than half of all employees leave a meeting without a clear idea of the next steps to be taken.



Source: Atlassian

Added to this is often the difficulty of finding a common slot for all participants to organize the next meeting, as their agendas are already full. **Decisions (if they are made at all) are themselves ultimately delayed**, as meetings are constantly being rescheduled.

Relations between teams

Ultimately, inefficient meetings have a negative impact on the quality of collaboration and relationships between team members. This creates **communication silos between teams**, which become disengaged and inward-looking, preventing the full potential of cross-functional collaboration from being realized.

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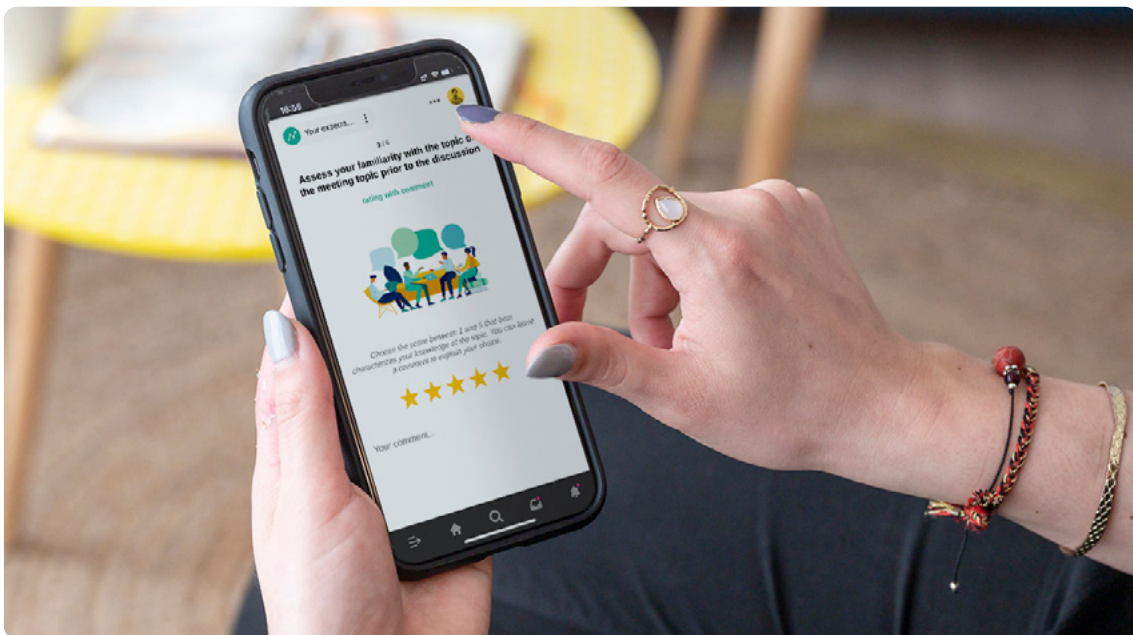
Why proposed solutions don't work

Why proposed solutions don't work

Ineffective solutions to the problem of meetings

Inadequate preparation

While meeting organizers are increasingly aware of the importance of good upstream preparation, this can sometimes be skewed by **a lack of visibility of participants' expectations**. Without a structured survey to gather their needs and assess their level of familiarity with the subject, the ensuing meeting content risks becoming top-down and difficult to digest.



Understanding participants' needs and their level of familiarity with the subject at hand can greatly simplify the running of your meeting.

Requiring teams to return to face-to-face meetings

One of the reasons given by companies for wanting their teams to return to 100% face-to-face meetings is that it's a way of meeting informally and exchanging ideas more easily than by organizing meetings. However, it can also lead to the opposite excess of **improvising meetings and stretching out exchange times**, despite everyone's schedules.

Relying too much on videoconferencing

As opposed to returning to 100% face-to-face meetings, spending the whole day holding one videoconference meeting after another is not a sustainable solution either. **It causes cognitive fatigue in participants**, reducing their concentration and productivity, and making them more passive in meetings. In fact, more than 1 in 3 employees today consider "Zoom fatigue" to be the biggest problem associated with virtual meetings.



Where possible, videoconferencing should therefore be seen as **a complementary tool to face-to-face interaction**, not a complete substitute for it.

Stop holding meetings

If meetings have so many negative impacts, why continue to hold them?

The question has already been raised, and many companies have recently tested the idea of doing without meetings altogether. Two observations were made:

- Significantly reducing the number of meetings (without stopping them altogether) **reduces micromanagement in teams**.
- However, eliminating all meetings from an organization's operations is not an effective solution, **as meetings remain strategic moments for moving forward**, discussing, innovating and collaborating. This is particularly true for hybrid teams, where meetings are the only way to exchange with remote colleagues.

This shows that the real problem lies not in the nature of meetings, but in **a lack of structure that renders them ineffective**.

Meeting structure at the root of inefficiency

From the preparation phase through to decision-making, structuring your meetings properly is fundamental to reducing all the costs listed above, and organizing productive, performance-boosting meetings. If the problem of inefficient meetings has persisted for so long in companies, it's because the effort required is deemed too great to transform their meeting practices at root.

For example, **Amazon has radically transformed the structure of its meetings** by implementing a comprehensive system focused on autonomy and accountability. This system includes controlling the number of participants, with the principle of "2-Pizza teams", i.e. a maximum of as many guests as it takes to eat 2 pizzas without going hungry (generally 7 to 8 guests). In addition, at the start of the meeting, a 6-page memo is distributed to participants to inform them of the context and objectives. Although this step, carried out independently, can be relatively laborious, it proves to be highly effective when used in conjunction with the other practices deployed by the American e-commerce giant.

This example shows that if you want to radically transform the structure of your meetings, the first step is **to create a comprehensive and flexible meeting space** for your teams. It must be able to centralize all your exchanges, adapt easily to hybrid as well as on-site wor-

king, and sustainably engage all participants.

For example, you can create such a space using [Klaxoon's all-in-one collaborative platform](#). Accessible anytime and from anywhere, it boosts the efficiency of your exchanges in meetings and beyond, and lets everyone express themselves in the way that suits them best. What's more, its collaborative tools **ensure continuity in the follow-up to your meetings**, centralizing all important information in one place, and saving time in creating minutes.

Now, let's take a look at the best ways for you **to harness the full power of your collaborative workspace** to better structure your meetings, and turn them into real opportunities to unleash the potential of the collective.



3.

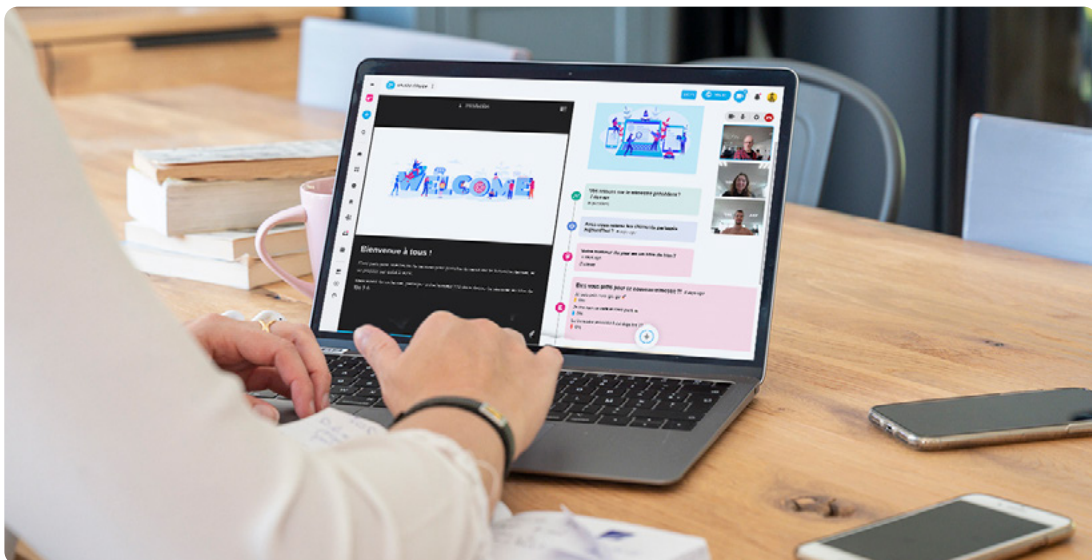
**7 ways to better
structure your meetings
and reduce costs
with an all-in-one
collaborative workspace**

7 ways to better structure your meetings and reduce costs with an all-in-one collaborative workspace

1. Offer the same experience on-site or remotely

Flexibility is part of what employees need to be effective in meetings. Your workspace must be able to adapt easily to both face-to-face and remote work, and above all **eliminate the adaptation time** needed to change context or device.

With Klaxoon, a **Board** or a **Session** lets you create a meeting space with an integrated videoconferencing tool, enabling participants to join the exchanges **from anywhere**, and from any connected device (computer, smartphone or tablet).



In a Session, the organizer can propose several Klaxoon activities to meeting participants, to be carried out together in a pre-defined order.

2. Optimize upstream preparation

We've already talked about the importance of preparing your meetings properly, without forgetting **to take into account the expectations of all participants**. Today, lack of preparation is still cited as the primary cause of ineffective meetings, by more than 1 in 4 employees.



For 28% of participants, lack of preparation is the primary cause of ineffective meetings

Source: Otter

There are many ways in which you can improve this preparation stage:

- Communicate a clear objective in advance;
- Define the stages of the meeting;
- Invite only key contacts (remember the "2 Pizzas rule");
- Define everyone's roles and responsibilities;

Also, from the outset, don't hesitate to **emphasize the results expected** at the end of your meeting, and to mention the means you feel are relevant to achieving them collectively.

3. Limit time

At this stage, you may also realize that the best way to achieve the desired result **is simply not to hold a meeting**. In this case, you can share information and exchange with your team **asynchronously**, while setting a deadline for submitting your ideas.

It has been shown that for the majority of routine meetings, the subject to be dealt with can be tackled with maximum efficiency **in just 30 minutes**. Don't hesitate to use a timer to keep time under control, and to focus each of your meetings on a key topic. You can also use the ROTI (Return on Time Invested) method available on the Klaxoon platform to evaluate the return on investment of your meetings and improve.

4. Engage participants at every stage

Find ways to **maximize the engagement of all the personalities present** in your meeting, whether extroverted or introverted, whether interacting orally or in writing.

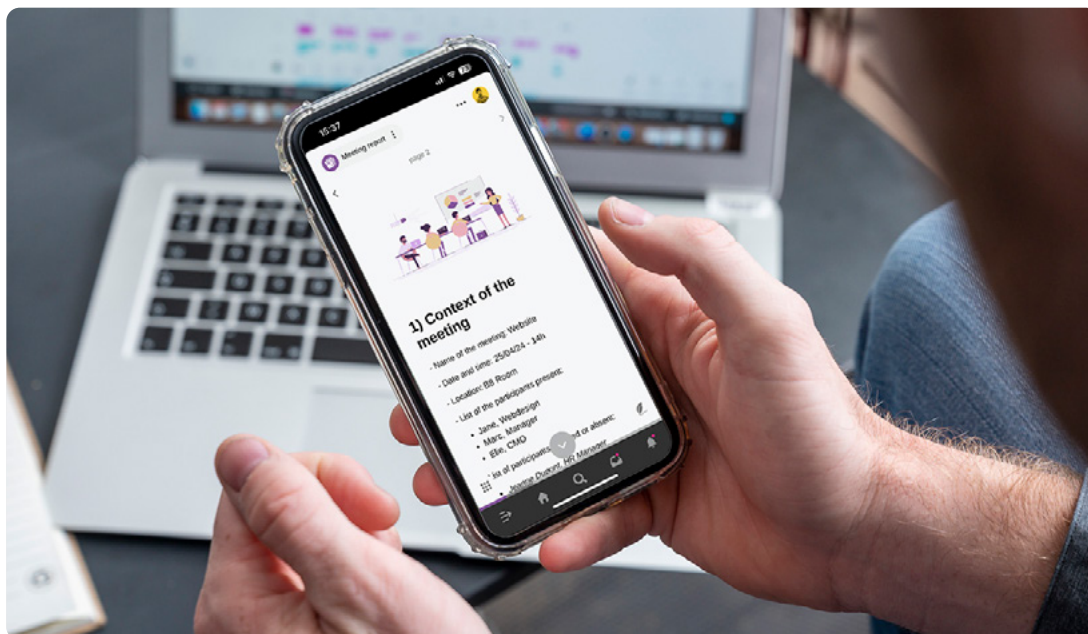
To help you do this, Klaxoon makes this stage considerably easier by generating engagement before, during and after your meetings:

- **In synchronous mode**, the platform draws on the power of the written word to enable everyone to express their ideas at the same time, without having to lengthen the meeting.
- **In asynchronous mode**, the Memo and Survey tools let you interact with your participants to share information or solicit consolidated feedback.
- Klaxoon also offers **interactive formats** to create a climate of trust between participants, whether they already know each other or are meeting for the first time: icebreakers, challenges, etc.

5. Make information accessible to all

To save even more time, **centralize your exchanges in a single space** that will remain accessible to participants at all times. You no longer need to manually transcribe your meetings, and if you can **automatically generate minutes** and export them with a single click, that's even better!

With Klaxoon, you can do just that from a Session or a Board. You can also **export the essential takeaways from your meetings in a Memo**, and share them with participants afterwards.



In just a few structured pages, all participants have a clear vision of the outcome of the meeting with Memo.

6. Implement a continuous improvement cycle

Constantly evaluate the effectiveness of your meetings **by subjecting them to regular audits, gathering feedback from your participants** and making any necessary adjustments for subsequent meetings. This process is particularly effective for recurring meetings (weekly, monthly, etc.).

7. Use recognized methods

Are you short of time to implement these actions? There are **many recognized meeting management methodologies** to help you rapidly improve the structure and organization of your meetings. We've already come across some of them in this guide.

The good news is that Klaxoon has **a library of ready-to-use templates** based on all these methodologies: weekly, brainstorming, retrospectives, icebreakers,...

With these templates, **your collaborative space is already structured** to help you be more efficient and save precious time, and all you have to do is add your information for cost-effective meetings!



Want to find out more about how Klaxoon can help you reduce your meeting costs?

Contact us to discuss!



The all-in-one visual collaborative platform for engagement & productivity

With a unique range of 10 visual collaboration tools, Klaxoon empowers people to drive engagement in and beyond meetings, boost productivity and shape an innovative workspace.

[Learn more](#)



Bolster engagement in the full meeting lifecycle

Empower individuals to accomplish more with others and drive sustained engagement levels by facilitating a culture of active participation in and beyond meetings.



We achieve 100% of engagement

Vincent Gonzalez, Performance leader - Safran Landing Systems



Make business easy, increase productivity and drive outcomes

Foster collaboration internally and externally with your business partners while accelerating decisions, processes, projects, delivery and time-to-market.



We save up to 40% meeting time

Marc Gigon, Global Digital Advisor - Microsoft



Fuel innovation and enable decision making within an innovative workspace

Equip your workforce with the tools to innovate and meet their business challenges on a daily basis, regardless of location, while rationalizing the application portfolio.



Klaxoon enables collective intelligence and collaborative decision making

Peter Quiguer, Digital Experience Director - Lesaffre International

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corporate clients

120
countries

15%
Fortune 500

4,7/5
★★★★★

100% secure environment

highest standards of security and data protection

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