

## **PMO Community of Practice January 2021 Meeting Summary**

Header (Required)

Title: Wasting time – how people waste their own time and other people's time

and what to do about it.

Brief description: Identify causes of wasting time and solutions

Learning objectives: Learning how to reduce time wasting activities caused by you, your peers,

and your organization

PDU Amount 1 1 PDU PDU Allocation 1 Leadership

# Member Discussion Topic 1/12/2021: Wasting time – how people waste their own time and other people's time and what to do about it

### Wasting time in meetings

- Sloppy meetings: everyone is unprepared, no agenda, no expected outcome
  - Supposed to discuss
  - Preparation is a vicious cycle, because someone may have no time, makes for an ineffective meeting, forcing more meetings...
  - At amazon, no PPT, 30-45 minute meetings organized into a 1 pager, outlining why they are all there, goal, there to do something or make suggestions
    - Distribute in advance
    - Everyone reads then they discuss
  - People don't show up
  - o Lacking "Communication"
  - Meeting leader does not cut off long running individuals (Motor mouths, Grandstanders)
    - Individual looking to impress
    - Too many people not needed everyone wants to participate
    - Meeting leaders, parking lot leader can cut people off
    - Need good discipline get agreement in advance
    - Facilitators should avoid the meeting getting out of control
      - Tell people to take things offline
      - SCRUM Master can wield the big stick and keep the meeting in control, and pull the meeting back from long running individuals
      - Some firms bring in a SCRUM Master for a few days a week to facilitate meetings
  - Disrespect last minute "I have a conflict"
  - Need time to get from one meeting to next all meetings start 5 min after the hour and end 5 minutes before the hour.
    - There are some macros/VB
    - There are also server side settings
  - All groups had group meeting at the same time not a good thing
    - Example: Issue w daily scrum at same time
  - Too many topics, caused irrelevance to take place
    - Have an upfront agreement on a meeting agenda, so everyone participates
    - Situations where this does not work:



- When person is overwhelmed, cannot attend, they should request a heads up
  so others can possibly pick up. Sometimes works.
- Situations where this works/does not when person is overwhelmed:
- What is the cost of an "Ineffective" meeting in salaries/benefits, etc.
- "Nicely" decline or indicate that you are not attending a meeting
  - People develop a mindset in preparation for a meeting, last minute rescheduling upsets that effort, not professional
  - Maybe reply "Tentative" to keep it even
  - You can divide/conquer if folks cannot attend
- When inviting, if folks are optional, use "CC"
- End meetings on time, versus encroaching on other meetings and causing attendees to leave "early"
- Some folks cannot get from one meeting to another
  - Solution meetings start at :05, end at :55
- Peeve: wasteful meeting, "Get to know each other", etc. that takes a big chunk out of meetings.
- Long meetings can seem like they will be forever, but end before you know it, many times not completing anything near the goals
- Wasteful intros, such as hobbies, vacation, favorite foods, etc.
  - All hands meetings with expensive inspirational speakers
  - "Funny things to do (Frisbees, etc.)" that an audience is asked to do, and take up a major portion of the meeting
    - Looking to enjoy themselves, relax and relate
    - Meetings can establish bonds using these practices
- Going to meetings you do not need to be at
- Missing the right people at meetings having to do the same meeting over again
  - Key people showing up late or leaving early
  - No shows
  - Key people sending junior people who are not authorized
  - Disrespect ex: accept meeting but cancel after the meeting started
  - o Good to get some agreements up front write it down, set up ground rules
    - When this works at the end of each meeting, actions items/follow ups. Get these follow ups.
    - When it does not work when people are overwhelmed, or last minute then ask them where they are at in the process.
  - Risk of getting assigned work
  - Let people know that you will follow up
  - Tell people in advance
  - Send a tentative with a comment if you have a conflict
  - Decline gives message that not interested
  - Have manager who accepts a meeting who needs to move it 10-minutes in
  - Divide amongst team members
- Too many people at meetings: redundancy, motor mouths, grandstanding
- Talking, but not doing anything

#### Wasting time in reporting

- In sync with discussing meetings that are expensive from a salary/benefit perspective, so are unnecessary reports
- Filling out reports that nobody reads



- Scared to cancel reports that are always done but never used
- "Test" see if regular reports are missed, by simply not running the reports and seeing who reacts
- Six sigma person spent weeks every month preparing reports and puts on a shelf.
  Found something else for her to do
- Took 3 full business days to generate reports checked with the president and did not distribute, waited for request – eliminated 2/3 of the reports
- Micromanage time reports reporting down to the 15-minutes when nobody cares
  - o Can work in some situations, like a lawyer booking time
  - Daily status reports
  - Work From Home task lists
    - Minimum items in task list, but a resource may not have many tasks
  - For a contractor to bill time, track exact time expenditure
- Doing manual reports over again
  - o Reluctance to do macros sometime due to lack of knowledge
  - Steal with pride get macros off the internet and share with team
  - 90% of excel users use 10% of functionality
  - Outlook folder organization maybe we could do for a future session
  - Ask colleagues about tips and tricks
- Multiple reports at different times using slightly different information but different formats
- Post best practices for the world to see
- "90% of the Excel users use 10% of the functionality"
  - You don't have to be a programmer to make things simple
  - Eliminate manual typing
- Outlook use of folders
  - Auto-redirect rules
  - Allows for important emails to stand out
  - o Folder reorganization in Outlook lunch and learn

#### **Distractions**

- Going to someone's office and talking about personal stuff, sports, politics, etc.
  - Relationship with those in close quarters call each other to bail them out from "Intruders" who are distracting, cut them off
  - Text can replace going into one's office and asking a basic question mitigates intrusions
    - Texting can be intrusive, disruptive can be double edged sword
    - Try to agree that responses are not needed immediately
    - Some issues with texting if boss needs you to drop right away.
      - You can say you are in the middle of something.
      - You can show busy.
    - Allow people to decide whether to get back right away
    - Set boundaries
- Busy is the new stupid how lots of churn/task switching and unfocused activity wastes time

#### Organizational

- People taking on work, but not doing it
  - o People say they will do something and don't
- Playing defense with turf wars, backstabbers, and intimidators



Wasting time by being intentionally misled

#### **Next Meeting**

Next meeting is Tuesday, February 9, 2021

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