



Avoiding Meetings that Lower IQs

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Every professional has experience in attending meetings that have offered little to no return on investment (ROI) for their valuable time. I have often wondered if some of the meetings I have attended in the past have actually lowered my IQ. A study by the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute has actually shown that meetings can lower the IQ of meeting attendees. The compelling survey results have inspired me to put together a list of meeting best practices. I am hoping that others will weigh in with their thoughts and that we can collaborate to put together a useful reference tool, and if nothing else, maybe something to look at for inspiration before you call your next meeting.

In terms of meeting best practices, I would offer the following:

- 🔗 **Have an Agenda** - an unstructured meeting creates an inherent barrier to productivity.
- 🔗 **Invite Only Those Who Need to Attend**- make sure that you have a reason for inviting each meeting attendee.
- 🔗 **Communicate to Those You are Inviting Why They are Invited**- attendees need to have an incentive to listen and engage in the meeting.
- 🔗 **Start your Meeting on Time.**
- 🔗 **Control Your Meeting**- do not let your meeting get too far off-topic or let an attendee take over your meeting- even your CEO.
- 🔗 **Demand Attention**- if the meeting is an in-person gathering then do not allow any type of smartphones, iPads, etc. If someone sneaks one in, then take it or remove them from the meeting. If it is a remote meeting and you are sharing a presentation see if you can use a tool that will monitor if they are viewing your screen (applications such as GoToMeeting offer this functionality.)
- 🔗 **Create Specific Action Items from the Meeting**- define specific action items that result from the meeting. This clearly communicates the output from the meeting and why you called the meeting.
- 🔗 **End your Meeting on Time.**
- 🔗 **Manage Your Meeting Reputation**- following the best practices above your colleagues will know that when you call a meeting you mean business and it will be a productive use of their time. They may even enjoy your meeting and they will make your meetings more productive. You should also elicit feedback from your meetings to show that you care about the attendees' time and want to improve as a meeting facilitator.



This is not a short list, but think back to an unproductive meeting you have attended in the past, if the meeting leader had just adhered to a few of the aforementioned best practices how much more productive would that meeting have been for you?