

Death by Meeting?

Boring, ineffective meetings...we've all attended them, but no one likes to admit how often they've led them. Yet meetings are where much of the work of leadership actually happens. I once heard the expression that a leader who doesn't enjoy meetings is like a surgeon who says, "If I didn't have to operate, I'd love my job."

We owe our people great meetings. In fact the meetings we lead ought to be the highlight of the workweek. Given the choice, people should prefer our meetings to going to a movie. Is the gap obvious yet?

Passionate people with a sense of calling to their mission, gathering to make decisions about direction...yup, ought to be among the most exhilarating of times. How do we make it so?

Put thought and creativity into your meetings - mix it up, think it through, and throw people a curve from time to time.

- Move the location
- Break into smaller groups or pairs for a quick discussion time
- Brainstorm

Whatever you do, don't make your meeting a forum where each person gives a quick update and then everyone adjourns. Honestly, if you took 30 minutes to really think about each meeting you lead this week, you'd be way ahead of most leaders.

Hold the right meetings - In the book *Death by Meeting*, author Patrick Lencioni writes about the clarity and momentum that come from separating your tactical and strategic meetings.

- Once a week for 45 to 90 minutes, engage your staff in a *tactical meeting*, covering all the logistics necessary that week to execute the ministries.
- Once a month, for 2 to 4 hours, gather for a *strategic meeting* on one or two urgent topics that relate to your strategy. Discuss big picture ideas and debate opinions on direction (yes, here's where you want to be sure you're having open conflict).
- Take the last five minutes of every meeting very seriously. This is the time to have a quick *wrap-up discussion* of what decisions were made at this meeting, which decisions were delayed, and how to best and honestly communicate this information throughout the organization.
- Finally, expect everyone in the meeting to *participate*. Insist on debate, show your passion for the mission, admit your own mistakes, and praise others who are working hard. Then watch people start getting to your meetings on time because they don't want to miss a thing.

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Death by Meeting is also available as a Leadership Seminar menu selection

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