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## FIVE REASONS TO MAKE MEETINGS MORE FUN

The average person spends more time in meetings than they'd like to. The average manager spends the majority of their workday in meetings. Given these facts, it isn't surprising that you can read lots of books, articles and tips about running and managing meetings more effectively. Seldom will you read that you should make your meetings more fun.

In this article I will give you five reasons why you should purposefully inject more fun into your meetings.

**Increase engagement.** Let me state the obvious. People like things that are fun. They engage mentally and emotionally in things they are enjoying. Ask yourself: Would you like people to be more fully engaged in your next meeting? Do you want people to be more mentally involved in the problem you are solving or the issue you are discussing? You've brought people together to benefit from their presence, not for them to fill a seat. Making your meetings more fun will increase their engagement in the meeting and help you produce better outcomes.

**Increase communication.** You can't take advantage of people's knowledge and experience if they don't share it. Including an element of fun in your meetings will get people more comfortable with speaking up and sharing their ideas.

**Improve relationships.** If people know each other better and are more comfortable with the others in the meeting, they will more likely share their ideas. So anything we can do to improve the relationships between people is a positive step. Does this mean that everyone in a meeting needs to be best friends? Of course not! What it does mean is that as people know each other better they will be more open to the ideas of others and more willing to share their own. Fun can make all of this happen.

**Increase energy.** How many meetings have you attended where the energy level feels like it is at zero? People's minds are elsewhere or on other projects. People aren't interested in the topic of the meeting. People don't understand why they are there. And all of this shows up in somber, lifeless body language and effort. Of course there are many ways to remedy this besides injecting fun into your meetings, but fun is still a wonderful tool to improve the energy level and attention to the meeting topics.

**Increase memory and retention.** We remember things that are more enjoyable longer. When we make our meetings more fun, we increase people's ability to remember the content and remember the decisions. When people remember the meeting's events better it improves the likelihood that they will complete their action items, share the results of the meeting more accurately with others and much more.

The five reasons above are excellent in themselves. But beyond them individually, the overriding reason to make your meetings more fun is that they will be more productive. We have meetings to get people with different opinions, perspectives and experiences working together. Our whole purpose in doing this is to create valuable outcomes. When we can find ways to make the investment of time and energy for all of those involved more productive, we should implement these ways!

This does not mean to add an item to your agenda that says fun. Nor does it mean that you should change the focus of your meetings – you are meeting for an important purpose and that should still be your focus.

Just remember that when we can make our meetings more enjoyable, even fun, we can enhance the productivity of those meetings – and productivity and results are why we were meeting in the first place.

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