

Business Meetings



Warm up:

- How often do you have meetings?
- How often do you travel for meetings?
- Do you prefer face to face or online meetings?
- What do you call someone leading a meeting?
- What are some typical conflicts that happen in business meetings?



1. Read the following terms for conflicts which commonly arise in business meetings. Did you mention all or some of them? Can you explain what the terms mean?

Creative idea conflict	Discrimination	Personality-based conflict
Work style conflicts	Leadership conflicts	Interdependent/Task-based conflicts



2. Describe what happens in the following meetings:

Status update meeting <i>A regularly schedules meeting, typically about a project to exchange information.</i>	Appraisal meeting <i>A meeting with groups or individuals to discuss goals, results and overall work performance.</i>
AGM (Annual General Meeting) <i>A yearly gathering of a company's interested shareholders to discuss the previous year's income statement and balance sheet amongst other things.</i>	Team building meeting <i>A meeting to create a feeling of togetherness with your team members, build shared goals and encourage collaboration.</i>



3. Read the facts below and guess the correct percentage:

67% 20% 76% 35% 50%

1. The average middle level manager spends around **35%** of their time in meetings.
2. The employees in upper management spend **50%** of their time in meetings.
3. A recent survey found that **67%** of employees complain that spending too much time in meetings prevents them from being productive at work.
4. Since the start of the covid pandemic the length of business meetings has decreased by **20%**.
5. A survey from 2019 taken in the UK, Germany and the USA says that **76%** of professionals prefer face to face meetings to calls or video chats.



4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about business meetings? Discuss with your class or partner.

1. 15 mins is the optimal meetings time.
2. Having an agenda and sticking to it is crucial.
3. Standing up during meetings increases teamwork and productivity.
4. An excessive amount of money is lost annually to pointless meetings.
5. Smartphones should be switched off during business meetings.



5. Can you guess which countries are being described in the following table by reading their business meeting etiquette?

India	China	England
France	Germany	Japan

<p><i>France</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make appointments for both business and social occasions. • Punctuality is treated quite casually, so your colleagues may arrive late. • Staying late at the office is common, especially for individuals in senior positions. • Fashion and appearance are much more important. • Dress tends to be on the formal side for both men and women. 	<p><i>India</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While you can show up to meetings on time, don't be surprised if your business partners are late. • The word "no" can be considered rude. Try to use words and phrases like "we will see" or "possibly" instead of "no." • One should avoid eating beef at business meetings, as cows are considered sacred. • It is common for meetings to be cancelled last minute.
<p><i>Germany</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A firm handshake is the traditional form of greeting. • Business events are well structured and straight to the point. • Don't make too many jokes during business meetings. • Be punctual. You should demonstrate that their time is valuable. 	<p><i>Japan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be punctual or arrive a little early if you are the guest. • Present and receive cards or gifts with both hands. • Do not point with your finger, instead use your open palm. • Wear dark coloured, conservative suits. • Be sure that your starting price leaves room for negotiation as you'll be faced with natural born negotiators.
<p><i>England</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When conversing, try saying "please," "thank you" and "sorry" frequently, as this is considered polite. • They often don't retain eye contact during a conversation. • Personal space is appreciated, so don't stand too close. • If someone wishes to dismiss your idea, they will often say that they might look to consider it at a later stage. • After-work drinks are common practice. It will work in your favour to go. 	<p><i>China</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowing is a typical way of greeting. Handshakes sometimes occur. • Senior members often lead meetings. • People of similar positions in different groups should sit across from each other; junior employees should never sit across from senior employees. • Giving gifts is common. Never hand out a gift that isn't wrapped. • It is customary to respond with "yes" even if you disagree with what is being said.



6. Discuss the following questions with you class or partner:

- Who got the most correct answers?
- Were you surprised by any of the points in the table? If so, which ones?
- Do you have experience doing business meetings with people from different countries and cultures?
- Do you know any other interesting rules of etiquette from rules around the world?



7. You are going to watch a video of a business meeting. The vocabulary below is used in the video, match it to their definitions on the left:

a. strategic initiative 4	1. To say something indirectly
b. intangible assets 5	2. At the same time
c. to imply 1	3. A heated argument
d. quarrel 3	4. A means through which a company puts its goals and visions into practice.
e. perpendicular 6	5. Valuable things in a company which are not physical. E.g. brand recognition, trademarks, copyright etc.
f. simultaneously 2	6. Two lines or more lines that intersect at a 90-degree angle



8. Watch the video [The Expert](#) and answer the following questions:

1. What is the company's new strategic initiative?

To increase market penetration, maximise brand loyalty and enhance intangible assets.

2. What does the company require?

7 red lines (drawn perpendicularly in red, green and transparent ink)

3. What are Walter and Justine's job titles?

Walter: Project Manager

Justine : Design specialist

4. What problems does the expert have with the project?

Drawing red lines in green and transparent ink.

Drawing seven perpendicular lines.

Drawing one line in the shape of a kitten or a bird.

5. A business trip is informally set up at the end of the meeting. What is it for?

It is for the expert to inflate a balloon in the shape of a kitten.



9. Discuss:

- How was your understanding of the video?
- Did you find it funny? Why/Why not?
- What point is being made in the video?