

Why Your Meeting Should Have Been an Email

Last week I gave [indicators that your email should have been a meeting](#). There are times when a push for efficiency via email backfires and actually creates more work. In those times, a meeting would have been more effective and more efficient.

However... there are times when a meeting is really a waste of time. When you consider the value of time, an unnecessary meeting is poor stewardship. When you calculate the time of every person in a meeting, meetings are not small investments. Thus, an unnecessary meeting robs energy and time from something else much more important. Some meetings could have been an email. Here are three indicators:

1. Monologue on operational matters

If a meeting is someone giving a monologue on tactics, the meeting could be an email. There are times when a leader or team member gives overarching direction, shares vision, or clarifies mission and values. In those moments, a passionate monologue can be effective. But a meeting is not the best venue for a running commentary on operational matters.

2. Information without any action

If a meeting is one long FYI, the meeting should have been an email. If a meeting is information without action, an email is just as effective and exponentially more efficient. If people can leave a meeting without action steps, an email would have been better.

3. Being unengaged is acceptable

If it is acceptable for people to come to a meeting and passively stare through the presenter while also engaging on their devices, the meeting should have been an email. Clearly the meeting is seen as just something else on the calendar and not something people feel deserves their full attention and engagement. If the meeting is deemed to be truly valuable, people are expected to engage. If the meeting is not valuable, value people's time enough to cancel it.

> [Read more from Eric.](#)