

## I'm afraid that's outside the scope of this meeting

### 1. Discuss the questions.

- How often do you take part in meetings at work? How useful and relevant are they? What do you discuss?
- How would you describe a productive meeting?
- What are some of the obstacles to productive meetings?

### 2. Watch a [video](https://youtu.be/K7agjXFFQJU) [https://youtu.be/K7agjXFFQJU] about a business meeting and see if any of the obstacles you mentioned in ex. 1 made it unproductive.

### 3. Look at the extracts from the video and complete each gap with a verb in the box in the correct form.

be    catch    emphasize    implement    put    take    throw

- I just wanted to **take** a few minutes and talk about the marketing strategy this year. If you've got one, just **throw** it out there.
- Sorry I'm a couple of minutes late. I got **caught** in traffic.
- I think we should **implement** Pinterest.
- OK, I just want to **emphasize** that there are no bad ideas here. We're just brainstorming.<sup>1</sup>
- Who knows how to **put** this on the screen up there? Because I want you to see all the details. Do we have the cables? Does this cable work?
- I think you're onto something with this idea. I really like it. Carol, did you get that down?

### 4. Watch the [video](#) again and check what the reactions to the comments in ex. 3 were.

- A man asked how long the meeting was supposed to last. [00:24]
- A man said that it was seven minutes, not two. [00:32]
- A woman said that was a fun idea. [00:45]

<sup>1</sup> In the video you can hear 'there's no bad ideas'. However, the word *ideas* is plural, so the correct form is 'there are no bad ideas'.

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- d) A woman said it would be a waste of money to plan around the weather. [00:59]
- e) Everybody started looking for cables and remotes. Somebody said they had a green marker. Someone called the IT guy. [02:10]
- f) Carol explained the abbreviations. [02:54]

### 5. Discuss the questions.

- What was the objective of the meeting in the video? To what extent was it achieved? **come up with ideas for the marketing strategy; some ideas were discussed, but nothing was decided and no tasks were assigned**
- What could have been done to make the meeting from the video more productive? **[Prompt your students by reminding them of the situations in the video: brainstorming marketing strategy ideas, an unclear agenda, a person talking at length, a person using the phone, a person negating everything, a problem with cables, a person taking unclear notes.]**
- Which of the obstacles presented in the video are the most annoying to you during work meetings?

### 6. Read the information in the box and answer the questions.

A meeting **facilitator** is a person whose job it is to make a meeting run smoothly and efficiently. A meeting facilitator can be the person who runs the meeting, one of the meeting participants, or an outsider whose job is only to **facilitate** dialogue and the decision-making process. Meeting **facilitation** requires confidence and people skills.

- Is anybody assigned the meeting facilitator role in your business meetings? How do they help? If there isn't, do you think such a function could be useful?
- What other skills does a person need to be a good meeting facilitator?
- How did people in the video try to facilitate the meeting? Were their reactions relevant and/or successful?
- Is meeting facilitation something you are or would be good at? Why/Why not?

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### 7. Match the words below to create steps in facilitating meetings.

- |                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| a) invite <b>3</b>             | 1) an agenda         |
| b) set <b>1</b>                | 2) progress          |
| c) focus on <b>4</b>           | 3) relevant people   |
| d) encourage everyone <b>6</b> | 4) the objectives    |
| e) monitor <b>2</b>            | 5) the key takeaways |
| f) share <b>5</b>              | 6) to speak          |

### 8. Look at the steps in ex. 7 again and discuss the questions.

- How does each of the steps make a meeting productive? What difficulties might happen if they are not taken?
- Would you use all the steps, or add any, for the following meetings:
  - a weekly status update meeting with the aim of catching up on work progress and discussing any relevant issues
  - a meeting aiming to understand and solve a problem, e.g. decreases in sales
  - a presentation about new software your company is going to implement

### 9. Complete the gaps with one word each.

- a) I'd like to get your feedback **on**...
- b) I'm afraid that's **outside** the scope of this meeting.
- c) I think we are getting **off** topic.
- d) I would like to point **out** that...
- e) I think you're **onto** something with this idea.
- f) Are we **on** the same page about...?
- g) Let me run **through** what we've agreed on.
- h) Let's move **on** to the next item.
- i) What ideas have you come **up** with?



### 10. Decide which of the sentences in ex. 9 could be used to do the following.

- a) encourage meeting participants to speak **a, i**
- b) focus on the meeting objectives **b, c, g, h**

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- c) monitor the meeting progress **f, g, h**
- d) share the key meeting takeaways **g**
- e) emphasize the importance of something **d, e, g**

### 11. You are a meeting facilitator. Decide what you would say in these situations.

**Use the words in brackets instead of the underlined items.**

- a) You want to talk for a bit about the next item on the agenda. (minutes)  
**I just wanted to take a few minutes to talk about the next item.**
- b) You want to encourage your colleagues to share the ideas they have. (throw)  
**If you have an idea, just throw it out there.**
- c) A colleague is getting off topic. (scope)  
**I'm afraid that's outside the scope of this meeting.**
- d) You want to present the meeting agenda. (run)  
**Let me run through the agenda.**
- e) You want to emphasize that the participants still haven't made a decision.  
(point)  
**I would like to point out that you still haven't made a decision.**
- f) You want to make sure that a colleague has the same idea as you about the task they need to do. (page)  
**Are we on the same page about the task?**
- g) You want to start talking about the next item on the agenda. (move)  
**Let's move on to the next item on the agenda.**

### 12. You work in an order management team at a company selling juices. You are having a weekly status update meeting. Your teacher will give you a role play card. Use the phrases provided while discussing some of the topics listed. If there is a problem, try to come up with some solutions. Before you start the role play, think about how you can create a context for the phrases.

**[If you can't put students in groups of four, leave out the Student D card, or both Student C and Student D cards.]**

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### Student A

#### Use:

- *the key takeaways*
- *move on to*
- *be onto something*
- *come up with*
- *get off topic*
- *take a few minutes to*

You are the meeting facilitator. The meeting agenda is as follows:

1. a big supermarket is going to start placing orders next month so your team is going to have more work
2. several team members are on sick leave and you want to thank the ones who are present in the meeting for their hard work
3. the company launched some new communication software last week and you want to check if your team is happy with it

### Student B

#### Use:

- *feedback on*
- *get off topic*
- *run through*
- *take a few minutes to*
- *emphasize that*
- *come up with*

Topics you want to discuss:

- some of your team members are on sick leave and work is accumulating
- yesterday your company ran out of tomato juice and you had to inform several customers that they wouldn't get their deliveries

**I'm afraid that's outside the scope of this meeting****Student C**Use:

- *point out that*
- *on the same page about*
- *move on to*
- *outside the scope of*
- *be onto something*
- *facilitate*

Topics you want to discuss:

- you find it difficult to use the new communication software and you think you and your team should get some training on it
- you want to take a day off next week

**Student D**Use:

- *on the same page about*
- *get off topic*
- *run through*
- *point out that*
- *the key takeaways*
- *facilitator*

Topics you want to discuss:

- a big supermarket is going to start placing orders next month so your team are going to have more work
- you couldn't work last Tuesday because your laptop broke down