



Case Study

Curiousmind helps improve meeting efficiency and effectiveness – improving morale and ROI along the way

IMPROVING MEETINGS

THE CHALLENGE

To improve meeting efficiency and effectiveness. Meetings were becoming a burden for many with poor engagement from participants and frequent frustration as a result of little being achieved.

THE SOLUTION

CM personnel attended and videoed a wide cross section of meetings to assess the current state and then, in consultation with a professor of linguistics, developed short, targeted training for all meeting chairs and presenters.

THE RESULTS

At the conclusion of our engagement there was an immediate improvement in meeting efficiency and effectiveness that also led to improved morale and estimated savings of nearly \$150,000 per month.

Curiousminds' many years of experience in working with people at all levels, coupled with our curiosity and history of collaborating with other specialists, enabled us to build trust and then find practical solutions that were immediately effective



THE CHALLENGE:

Meeting efficiency is a key issue in most organisations. While effective meetings can deliver benefits far beyond their running costs, and can build more trusting, respectful relationships along the way, ineffective meetings can do the opposite. They can be a major drain on human and financial resources. All too frequently they generate mistrust and lead to “ongoing debriefing” outside the meeting room that continues to burn time and money while impacting on morale.

With over 300 people attending between 2 and 6 meetings a day, many people felt they were wasting precious time and frequently arrived with a strong negative mindset.

The meetings we observed varied widely in their effectiveness. Some were truly exceptional (and were used to model effectiveness); most were functional while one or two were little more than a waste of time. The least efficient meeting not only achieved little—it also left some attendees frustrated or even angry having negative impact on morale and productivity long after the meetings have finished.



A good measure of meeting efficiency is one that balances the pragmatic and interpersonal dimensions

THE SOLUTION:

CM personnel attended and videoed twenty meetings over two days. These meetings ranged from pre-start (alignment) meetings through operational and maintenance meetings up to the senior leadership team.

Then, in consultation with a professor of linguistics, we studied each video mapping out interactions and assessing effectiveness against the following criteria;

1. Clarity of purpose
2. Engagement
3. Attendance
4. Environment
5. Duration
6. Managed process

Like all human interactions, meetings are inevitably multifunctional. While meetings may be motivated by pragmatic workplace tasks, they are also key opportunities for everyone to build satisfying professional and personal relationships. This means that time efficiency and topic focus are not the sole measurements of meeting success. Sticking to the agenda and getting through it ASAP may be pragmatically efficient but interpersonally disastrous. Similarly, a 'chatty' meeting that loses track of the agenda or allows personality clashes is also unsatisfactory. A good measure of meeting efficiency is one that balances the pragmatic and interpersonal dimensions.

Targeted Training

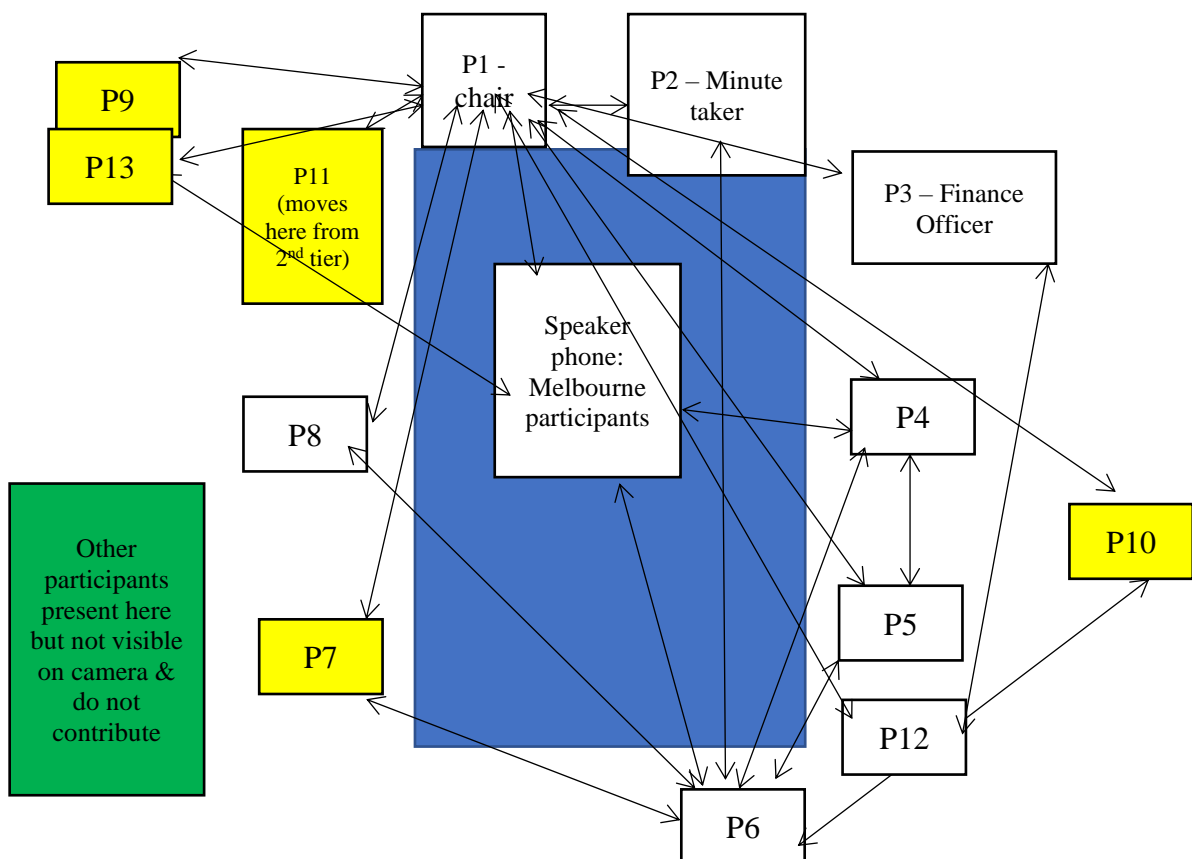
We then designed short, targeted training sessions for all meeting chairs and presenters. Focusing on the above listed criteria and using the successful meetings as examples we were able to find improvements in all 6 areas. Follow-up in situ coaching was also made available for anyone who required it.

Engagement Maps

Working out who needs to be at a meeting can be challenging as managers and participants may argue that everyone could benefit from the information shared. Also people not invited could feel left out or of a lower status. However, from the principles outlined above we argue that redundant attendees can actually be counter-productive.

One tool that can help is to draw a communications map of a meeting and then discuss the outcomes with participants.

In the sample map below, we were able to help meeting chairs decide who should be invited – for example in this meeting person #4 presented for 2 minutes at the very beginning and then sat passively for 40 minutes. Should they be allowed to leave once they've finished contributing?





THE RESULTS

Within a few weeks, this training was credited with improving meeting efficiency, engagement and morale with an estimated saving of \$150,000 / month.

People were leaving meetings feeling like;

- It was a worthwhile investment of time
- They had contributed
- They'd been heard
- They understood what was expected
- That any agreements made were accountable

ABOUT CURIOSMIND

Curiousmind is the coming together of a team of passionate educators and change agents. With many years' experience in the personal and professional development sphere and diverse career backgrounds CM facilitators and coaches have unified around a desire to re-engage people with their innate curiosity.

We see curiosity as the catalyst for all forms of engagement leading to improved exploration and discovery, creativity, problem solving, team bonding and learning.

We have uncovered several key educational and managerial assumptions that actively suffocate people's curiosity. By unveiling these assumptions, we help engage and empower people to learn and change.

