



## danibu update

Winter 2021 - update #18

### The MEETING issue

Over the past 14-or-so-pandemic-months, I've had the great fortune to not only own my own consultancy, but also to work with truly wonderful clients, on projects that were impactful, meaningful and fun and reconnected to the *why* behind the reason I started down this communication career path.

As I have primarily been working from home, I also had a chance to find (more) agenda balance and learned to turn down opportunities, take breaks and plan and hold meetings more mindfully.

There's a perception in corporate life that every day has to be stuffed with meetings. *"Are you lonely? Have a meeting!"* Meetings are often treated as things that 'just happen', and this mindset increased during the lockdown because connecting to others was just a mouse-click away. But did the inflationary use of TEAMS or ZOOM meetings really bring the quality of interaction wanted?

Poor meetings sap a team's energy. This danibu update shares how to make meetings great again.

Have a wonderful and healthy 2022, climbing the stairs towards magical moments of connecting, communicating better and, above all, having fun!



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## You've got a role to play



Making meetings work well (again) across an organization means realizing you don't have to do it all yourself. Many leaders go into meetings thinking they have to create (and control) the agenda, take all the notes, and create a good experience for the team, while at the same time working to keep everything efficient, productive, and on target. Why not putting other participants to work,

letting them contribute to making the meeting effective?

Here are the **3 distinct key roles** you can assign to others. And if you take turns filling each role, each and everybody will ultimately become engaged:

### **1. Facilitator**

The chairperson who manages the overall meeting process, working with the team to create the agenda beforehand. During the meeting, he/she guides the group through the discussion, ensures everyone participates, and keeps the discussion productive. And why not closing the meeting by asking participants to reflect how it went and what they think should be kept or changed for the next meeting?

### **2. Note Taker**

The scribe who records key decisions, insights and action items and ensures these notes get circulated afterwards.

### **3. Timekeeper**

The master of ceremony who gently escorts all speakers back to their time limit agreed and ensures nobody runs overtime, ending the meeting on schedule. He/she can also take charge of observing the meeting etiquette, ensuring everybody's tone of conversation is respectful and have permission to interrupt when things get off track or when sensitive interpersonal dynamics evolve.

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## **The 5 golden meeting rules**



The average business pro spends 2.5 hours in meetings every day (= a total of up to 1 year of his/her life!). Since the start of the Covid-work-from-home situation in Feb 2020, this number has been increasing. Love it or hate it, but meetings are necessary to get a hold of people. But if you apply a few golden rules before setting your next team meeting, you'll get productivity and fun back into your (virtual, hybrid or F2F) gathering.

### **1. Start with the *Why***

You don't have to necessarily hold a meeting as an occasion to get the team work as a unit. Microsoft TEAMS, Slack or Google Hangout make collaboration possible anytime and anywhere. So, if you call in a meeting, make sure it brings visible value for all involved. Define the purpose of your meeting beforehand: Inform? Co-create? Share and discuss?

### **2. Define the *What* with a clear agenda**

If participants come unprepared, people veer off track and the topics discussed are considered a waste of everybody's time — it's probably the result of poor agenda design. Yes, it does take time to slate out and make a precise itinerary for all subjects to address, but if you sit down to put together an agenda, you'll realize immediately whether you need this meeting in the first place, or whether an email can work wonder instead. You will also be able to flesh out what topics need to be discussed within the whole group, and which need to be singled out in 1:1 conversations. The facilitator will circulate the agenda to everyone – ideally three days before the meeting – and get everybody tuned into the common objectives to be achieved.

### **3. Define *Who* should attend - or not**

Avoid bystanders! '*The more, the merrier*' does not apply to effective meetings. Keep the number of participants manageable. And if it's a co-creation meeting (idea session), apply Jeff Bezos' '*Two Pizza Rule*: If it takes more than two pizzas to feed a work group, then the crowd is too big for the meeting to be effective.

### **4. Less is more – keep the 45-minute frame**

Participants act and decide better in high time pressure conditions. Ideal meetings are scheduled for 45 minutes (no longer!), giving participants the necessary sense of urgency to realize they're short on time and so have to focus on getting the work done. Skimming sessions to 45 minutes encourages participants to respect the time slots for presentation and discussion and avoids getting stuck in one topic or people stealing too much air time with self-absorbed speeches.

### **5. Try the unconventional: No deck! No sitting! Take a walk!**

Why not ditching the PowerPoint Presentation? Who says you need slides at all? Why following the same format or schedule at every meeting? Getting rid of the boardroom setting, holding a walking meeting or weaving in a breathing exercise or other ice breakers resets everybody's attention button and brings back energy into the meeting flow. If you need to schedule a meeting after 4pm throw in a couple of drinks to create goodwill and after-work chill.



# Meeting energizers



Let's be honest - meetings are not always the funniest part of our jobs. And yet, they're important to move forward with projects. So, how to make them more engaging and keep our energy up level? It's good to incorporate some stimuli that get meeting participants oriented back to the task and add something new to our thinking and way of meeting.

These **3 simple energizers** will help banish meeting fatigue (in the online and offline meeting arena):

## 1. Add *air* to your meeting

The 1-minute breathing exercise is the most practical way to introduce *Zen* to your meeting. Breath and productivity go hand in hand. A boost of oxygen is the simplest form of stress management and the perfect exercise for overworked executives. Here's how to do it:

- Inhale to the count of two
- Exhale to the count of two
- Inhale to the count of two
- Exhale to the count of three
- Inhale to the count of two
- Exhale to the count of four
- Inhale to the count of two
- Exhale to the count of five

Repeat the set 3 times, then return to your normal breathing. You'll immediately feel how your improved breathing regulates the oxygen flow in your blood and makes you more alert.

## **2. Add *movement* to your meeting**

Squats are a great 'functional movement', i. e. movements we do in our daily lives, like walking, lifting, bending down to pick things up or carrying objects. They're super beneficial because they easily translate to our everyday activities and can so be easily included into meetings.

Squatting is simple (unless you're wearing skinny jeans), and all you need to do is get up (from your chair), stand with your feet hip-width apart, feet in a parallel position and then squat down for 30 seconds, as far as you can comfortably go (or until your outfit decently allows you to). If you have trouble balancing, hold on to a chair or the wall to feel more stable. Safety first!

## **3. Add *interaction* to your meeting**

'What's your story' is a simple way to break the ice or disrupt conventional slide-after-slide presentation through telling a shared story. This is not only fun but shaping improvisation skills, too. The meeting facilitator starts with "*Once upon a time, in a land far away, 5 people got together to solve all the world's problems. Everything seemed easy, until one day one of the people saw on the horizon...*". Then he/she invites the next person in the group to continue the story and add the next line. This keeps going until everyone's contributed to the story.

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## **What's up in the danibu community?**



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### **DOMO Chemicals**

Time flies (14 months) when you're having fun! My interim assignment with DOMO Chemicals was nicely rounded off last week. Time to say good bye to these fine folks and this wonderful company. I really enjoyed working with this skilled pool of diverse talent, across different European markets. Thanks for a very special time - and for making this farewell photo collage.

### **MSD Animal Health**

In 2022 danibu will continue to provide training sessions to different teams of MSD Animal Health. Catering for the company's specific needs and preferences, a choice of 'danibu lunch 'n learn workshops' - each highlighting a different communication/presentation topic - will be offered.

Need a communication injection over TEAMS or Zoom? Learning has never been easier! [Email danibu](#) to create your own company training or individually join one of the [open-for-public danibu sessions in 2022](#).





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### **Quadriga University**

I was offered a speaking slot and made part of this year's [Global Communication Summit program lineup](#). What a great opportunity for me to discuss with participants - across industries and geographies - how Leaders' personal communication style can make all of a difference in the post-pandemic workplace and help (re)connect their internal audiences successfully.


### **danibu brochure 2022**

It's simple, really, to keep track of danibu activities or to get in touch: Besides this danibu update (yes, the quarterly newsletter you're reading right now ... ) there is the annual [danibu brochure](#). It's a simple tool with hidden power to connect. This pocket-size booklet provides danibu customers, prospects, friends and members of the danibu community with a snappy overview of communication and creative services, recaps areas of activity and lists all [training dates for 2022](#).

If you have a temporary communication vacancy to fill or are in need of a pair of creative outside hands – click [here](#).




## Did you know? Pixelhunter

 **Pictures for Twitter**

Even though supported, pictures are not the main part of Twitter feeds — text is the king. However, Twitter provides every way for you to design your profile to make it sleek and appealing.


**Profile photo**

Pro Tip: Create the whole new profile experience by matching your profile photo with your Header picture.




**Post image**

Pro Tip: It's slightly taller than an Open Graph image, but you may use Open Graph if you're designing a picture for the Twitter Card.



**Header**

Pro Tip: Because it will be displayed really wide, you can freely experiment with the layout. However, sometimes this image is cropped vertically, so don't put anything important to the very bottom of this image.



Do you often need photos for different applications and purposes? Whether for social media banners, websites, YouTube or (PowerPoint)presentations - you will need to go through the hassle of making your photos fit to different formats. Great imagery will make your meetings more lively and your discussions more visual. With a simple tool you can adjust your photo's size in one click, using Pixelhunter.io! [Read further](#) to learn more ...



# danibu

*Making your communication dance*

danibu is the communication consultancy and creative production company that gets everybody in step with one another. danibu partners with clients across industries and markets to improve communication footprints and to create unique work for leading businesses and brands.

Our mailing address is:  
danibu Gouwweteringkade 24 Haarlem, 2033 NS Netherlands

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