



HYBRID MEETINGS: EXPERIENCE, EXPECTATION & ENGAGEMENT

As more organizations are moving towards a hybrid work environment, they must be more intentional about ways to build connection and collaboration. Hybrid work has the potential to create the most optimal work environment, bringing together and leveraging the best of both in-person and virtual work. However, hybrid work will only be successful with intentionality, and organizations must be deliberate and focused on building control, connection, collaboration, culture and contribution – take a look at our Action Step, [Overcoming the Myth of the Loss of the 5Cs](#), which provides specific tips on how to do so. We now want to focus on how to make meetings in a hybrid work environment as engaging, productive and equitable as possible, as meetings are a regular source of workplace control, connection, collaboration, culture, and contribution. Here are our recommendations:

1. Experience. Leaders and managers must think through the type of experiences they intend to create with meetings. First, we recommend assessing whether a meeting is necessary at all, or would a phone call or e-mail better serve the purpose. What is the purpose? What is the intended outcome? Does something need to be decided or debated? During the pandemic, meetings increased substantially, and employees faced Zoom fatigue. To this end, always consider first whether a meeting is even necessary. Next, in cases in which a meeting would be beneficial, decide whether the meeting should be online, in-person or hybrid. Especially in cases of an online or hybrid meeting, make sure all participants get the same experience (i.e., make an effort to bring online participants into the conversation so they are active participants and not spectators; monitor the chat to make sure to get everyone's thoughts; utilize proper technology so speakers can be seen and heard by all).
2. Expectation. In a hybrid environment, it is even more vital to clearly communicate expectations about the meeting. What is the goal of the meeting? Is the meeting in-person, online or hybrid? How should participants present themselves (i.e., cameras on for online participants; attire necessary for client meetings)? What type of preparation is necessary or ideal ahead of time? By clarifying and spelling out the purpose, format, preparation and professional presence required at the meeting, there is a greater chance for a successful outcome.
3. Engagement. Leaders and managers must be intentional about engaging meeting participants before, during and after meetings to attain the best results.
 - Before the Meeting: Give participants a heads up about the meeting goal and consider having them prepare ahead of time (i.e. submitting thoughts; coming

to meetings with questions, and even asking members of the team to be prepared to share information during the meeting) so they can be active participants. This is especially important for introverts, those who are new to the team, and others who may feel less comfortable voicing their opinions in a public forum and this will help level the playing field. In addition, it is important to connect with participants before the in-person, online and/or hybrid meeting begins, in order to build connections (i.e., welcome and talk with all participants as they come into a physical or virtual room).

- During the Meeting: Make sure all voices are heard in order to engage all participants. Whether in-person, online or hybrid, ask and direct questions to all participants. For online and hybrid meetings, it is necessary to encourage and monitor the chat discussion to make sure everyone's opinion is considered (those who are leading the discussion may find it helpful to tap someone involved with the meeting to monitor the chat and make sure that all insights are shared). Additionally, for hybrid meetings make sure to level the playing field for online and in-person participants – make a point to bring online participants into the conversation, and ensure the technology is good such that online participants can actively participate.
- After the Meeting: Consider ways to understand, confirm and apply lessons learned. For example, build in time to debrief after a meeting either through a virtual post-meeting or in-person chat. Allow participants to provide thoughts and feedback after the meeting via e-mail or notes – this will ensure that all participants (introverts; new employees; online participants) have additional opportunities to provide their insights. Depending on the meeting goal, consider post-meeting deliverables so participants can think through applications.

The Alliance is here to help provide guidance on ways to foster success in a hybrid work environment, including ways to create successful meetings. Members have access to several Alliance resources as part of their benefits: the [Resource Library](#), [Strategy Calls](#), [Policy Reviews](#), [Advisory Hours](#) and [Signature Seminars](#). Take a look at our action step, [Leverage Alliance Benefits](#), which discusses ways to partner with us and most effectively utilize your benefits. To discuss specific strategic advice/resources, contact [Manar Morales](#).