



Timeboxing

#workhack

We all know this story, right? Everything there is to be said at a meeting has already been said, but unfortunately not by everyone. When we talk about wasting time in companies, meetings are always at the top of the list. And while there has been countless literature and methods to improve the method for decades, poorly led and poorly facilitated meetings still seem to be the rule rather than the exception. At the very least, our assertion about bad meetings has a shocking number of heads nodding in agreement. There is a desperate need for a #workhack. We have found, in Design Thinking Projects, that “timeboxing” is a real miracle cure. That’s why we have chosen it as a #workhack. In our version of „timeboxing“, speaking slots in meetings are time limited.

How does it work? The amount of speaking time per person is determined for each agenda item. This is particularly helpful for recurring meetings because the participants learn to prepare their contributions. With a time limit of one or two minutes, the speaker cannot start thinking while speaking. It also leads to more equality – everyone gets equal speaking time. Timeboxing gradually leads to more efficient meetings that end on time and with clear results.

HELPS WITH

- meetings that never end on time.
- meetings in which people frequently veer off topic.
- rambling speakers, endless discussions or too many agenda items.
- poorly focused, ill-prepared participants.
- making better use of the expertise of introverts, which is too often hidden from view.

TO BE CONSIDERED

- Participants should be asked in advance if they agree with the introduction of limited speaking times – especially the managers, otherwise it cannot be enforced.
- The running time should be visible to all participants (not a “hidden” app on some smartphone). It really helps as a guide for any rambling speakers, (and their critics).
- We recommend planning short time limits – this brings more focus to the meeting. Often a time limit of two minutes is much more effective than a 10 minute time limit.

TOOLS

- We recommend using the medium or large version of the so-called “Time Timer” – a mechanical watch. The Time Timer can be seen by everyone and that is very important.
- Some apps are also suitable for this hack – but then it must be placed in a way that everyone present has a good view of the time.