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Improving Meeting Effectiveness & Collaboration

Research Conducted for PHC by Ryan Blumenfeld,
MPH Candidate, Geisel School of Medicine

Introduction and Goals

This project was developed to better understand how meetings impact productivity, collaboration and decision-making.

The project involved:

- Literature review
- Survey tool development
- Meeting productivity analysis
- Exploration of AI tools



Why is Meeting Effectiveness Important?

Research Shows:

- Employees spend a significant portion of their workweek in meetings
- Inefficient meetings reduce productivity and deep work time
- Effective meeting practices improve:
  - Communication
  - Decision-making
  - Accountability

Key characteristics of productive meetings:

- Clear agendas and goals
- Balanced participation
- Actionable next steps
- Efficient time management



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What the Research Shows



- Managers can spend **25-80%** of their work time in meetings.
- Self-reported meeting productivity is often **33-47%.**
- One survey found **33.4%** of meeting time is unproductive.
- Executives reported that **20-30%** of meetings are unnecessary.

Deep Work Time:

Focused work on cognitively demanding tasks such as problem solving, planning or creating.



Research Suggests:

- Interruptions reduce concentration, decrease productivity and increase mental fatigue
- Can take **20-25** mins to regain focus
- Deep work involves a minimum of **2 hours**

Strategies to Protect Deep Work Time:

- Schedule meetings within designated time blocks
- Reduce unnecessary recurring meetings
- Keep meetings concise/purpose-driven
- Protect uninterrupted work periods during peak productivity hours

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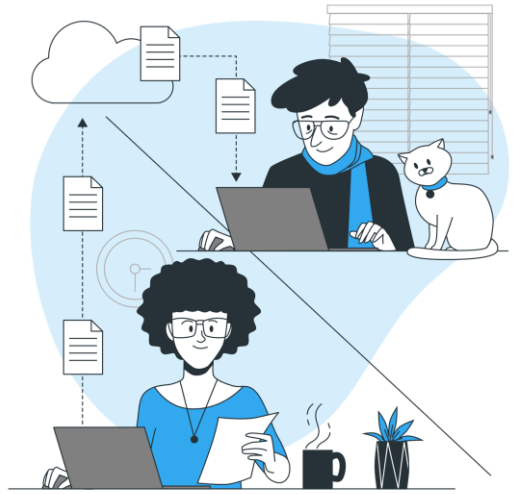
Productivity Throughout the Day

When Are Employees Most Productive?

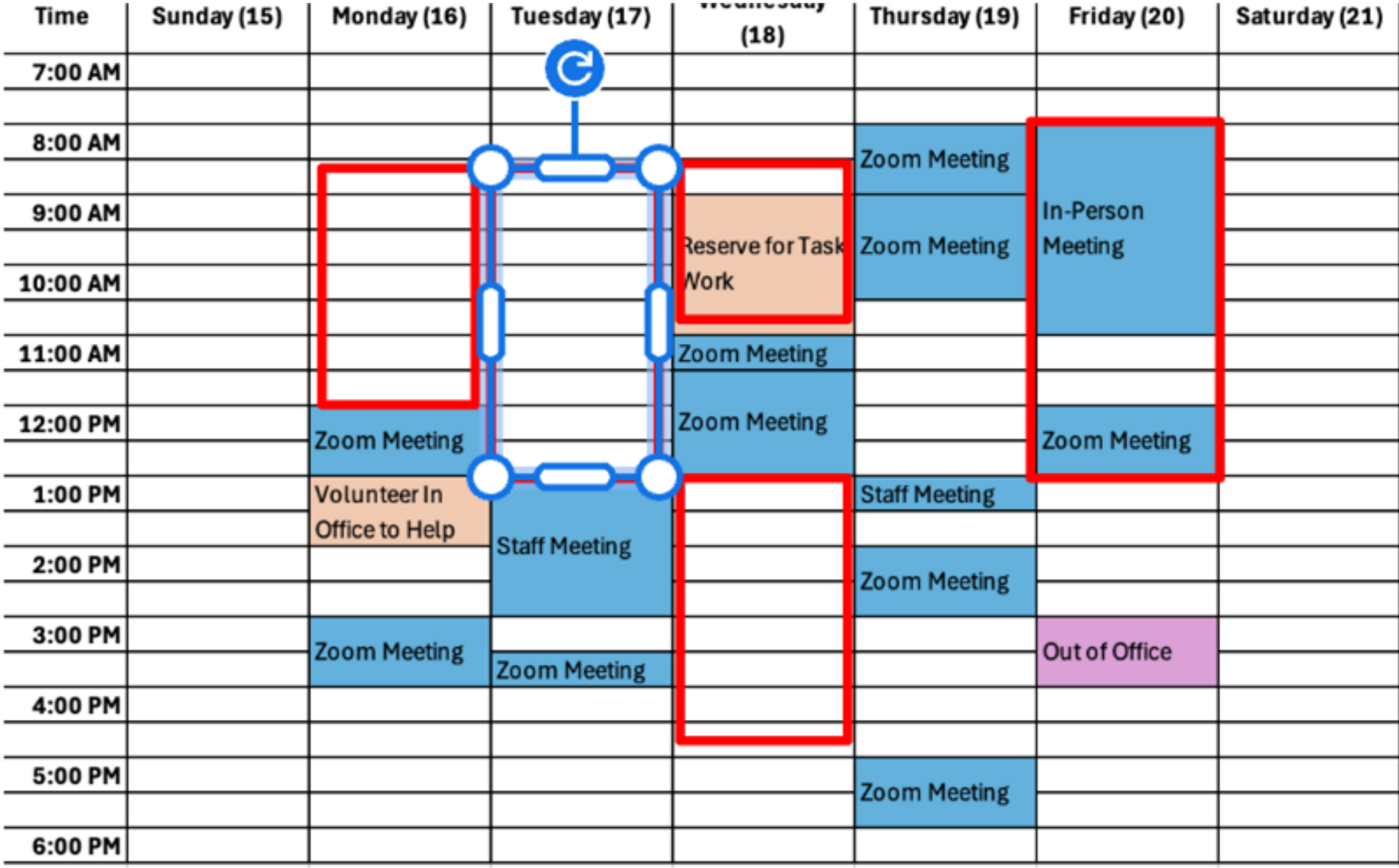
- Performance often declines throughout afternoon, highest concentration during morning hours
- Often prefer meetings later in day - clustering meetings interrupts work cycles
- Uninterrupted time blocks for focused work

Understanding Productivity Patterns:

- Schedule meetings intentionally and consistently
- Reduce unnecessary interruptions
- Improve employee focus/efficiency
- Align collaboration with natural workflow patterns



Example Schedule



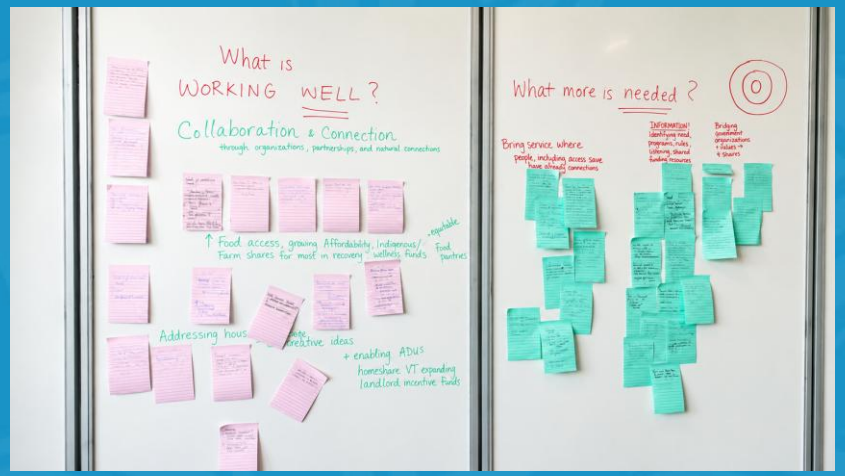
Time	Sunday (15)	Monday (16)	Tuesday (17)	(18)	Thursday (19)	Friday (20)	Saturday (21)
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM					Zoom Meeting	In-Person Meeting	
9:00 AM				Reserve for Task Work	Zoom Meeting		
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM				Zoom Meeting			
12:00 PM		Zoom Meeting		Zoom Meeting		Zoom Meeting	
1:00 PM		Volunteer In Office to Help	Staff Meeting		Staff Meeting		
2:00 PM					Zoom Meeting		
3:00 PM		Zoom Meeting	Zoom Meeting			Out of Office	
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM					Zoom Meeting		
6:00 PM							

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Before, During & After Meetings

Before

- Create agendas to help improve focus and preparation
- Clear purpose and expectations are communicated



During

- Encourage participation from all attendees
- Stay focused on agenda
- Structured decision-making improves outcomes

After

- Clear action steps improves accountability
- Summaries support implementation
- Reflection and feedback

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AI in Meetings



Research has Explored How AI Tools Can Support Meetings:

- Create automated summaries
- Track action/follow-up tasks
- Identify participation patterns
- Measure topic distribution/time allocation

Benefits:

- Reduce administrative burden
- Improve recall of discussion points
- Increase completion of action items
- Provide insights into meeting participation

Example AI Prompt: “Analyze this meeting. Break down time spent on each topic, level of participation, and overall productivity. Compile it into a table”

Topic	Approx. Time Spent	Level of Participation	Productivity
Opening / AI transcript explanation / introductions	~3 min	Mostly facilitator-led	Low-Medium
Topic 2 Presentation	~21 min	Presenter-led with attentive audience	High
Q&A on presentation	~6 min	High group participation	High
Research update	~4 min	Moderate discussion	Medium-High
Topic 2 presentation	~18 min	Presenter-led with strong engagement	Very High
Q&A on presentation / discussion	~5 min	Collaborative discussion	High
Announcements / advocacy / wrap-up	~7 min	Group-wide participation	Medium

Example 2: “What percentage of this meeting was productive vs unproductive? Give an in depth explanation. Provide analysis on how the meeting could have been more productive.”

Category	Estimated %	Explanation
Productive Time	~85–90%	Most of the meeting was focused on useful work: accessible housing policy, energy insecurity updates, shelter data, funding, advocacy, and next steps.
Unproductive/Lower-value time	~10–15%	Some time was lost to tech issues, repeated explanations about AI transcript recording, and a slightly scattered ending discussion around announcements.

Strategies and Next Steps



- Send agendas before meetings and define purpose/goals
- Keep meetings concise, focused, and action-oriented
- Clear next steps, responsibilities, and share meeting summaries
- Evaluate meetings, gather employee feedback
- Schedule meetings intentionally (around deep working time)
- Explore AI-supported tools for planning, documentation, and follow-up

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Alice Ely

Alice.ely@uvpublichealth.org

603-523-7100