



## Time Management and Productivity Expert Laura Stack Addresses the Time-Wasting Nature of Meetings



DENVER, Colorado, February 14, 2013 – Time management and productivity expert Laura Stack believes that meetings might be the bane of the workplace. In her latest blog titled [“Do We Really Need 32 People at This Meeting?”](#) Stack examines the time-wasting potential of meetings, and she discusses ways to improve the productivity of those that can’t be avoided.

Stack says that too many corporate meetings are self-proliferating time-wasters that bring co-workers together to discuss ways to maximize team productivity, but instead, they accomplish the exact opposite. As time passes, meetings can drag on for hours as everyone tries to have their say, which can kill productive momentum.

Still, meetings are necessary for many organizations to meet strategic goals.

“The higher you rise in an organization, the more of your time is spent ‘working’ in meetings: making decisions, determining strategic direction, and collaborating with other leaders,” Stack says. “At their best, meetings help us share information, coordinate plans, ensure alignment, maximize limited resources, and spark innovation.”

In order to have a productive meeting, Stack tells her readers that participants must know why they’re having a meeting, stick to the agenda, and limit attendance only to those who can contribute.

“For example, if you oversee the sales team, and a meeting involves purchasing new software for the corporate accountants, do you need to attend? No,” Stack says. “Do you even need to show the flag? No.

“On the other hand, Fritz in accounting may need to attend your quarterly sales meetings if he tracks your department’s costs or net profits.”

Stack suggests guidelines to decide how many people should attend, depending on the meeting type. Is the purpose of the meeting to:

**1. Communicate company strategy?** Accept limited input and have a strict schedule.

“These all-hands meetings can include everyone in the organization, as long as the moderators limit questions and stick to a strict schedule,” Stack says.

**2. Brainstorm?** Limit these meetings to 25 people. Consider breakout sessions where smaller subgroups handle specific topics and report in to the moderator.

**3. Solve a problem or stimulate discussion?** Fewer than 15 attendees are ideal.

“If you have more people who should participate, especially when company direction is involved, consider breaking it into two or more meetings,” Stack says.

**4. Create action plans?** All staff members should have a thorough understanding of the organization’s strategic priorities and their place in it. The entire team should understand how their operational tasks align with the organization’s goals.

“Smaller is better, especially when seeking buy-in,” Stack says. “Fewer than 10 attendees on an intact work team works well here.”

**5. Make Decisions?** Stack advises that decision-making meetings be limited to six people, and then only to those it directly impacts: CEOs, CFOs, Presidents, Chairmen, Directors, etc.

“Some people believe that anyone a meeting might possibly affect, even tangentially, should attend,” Stack says. “Inoculate yourself against this idea. Otherwise, where will it end?”

“You’ll lose days of wasted time, and half the people who attend the meetings will either doze off or go catatonic before you finish anyway.”

When in doubt, Stack advises making the decision to decline attending a meeting. Resist inviting anyone who does not need to attend.

“Don’t attend meetings where you have no useful input,” Stack says. “Apple’s Steve Jobs always kept his meetings small when possible, and he wasn’t averse to excusing people if he thought they didn’t belong; you may want to do the same—they will thank you.” For information on creating a culture of speed, visit [TheProductivityPro.com website](http://TheProductivityPro.com), Email [Laura@TheProductivityPro.com](mailto:Laura@TheProductivityPro.com), or call 303-471-7401.

### **About Laura Stack:**

[Laura Stack](#) is a time management and productivity expert who has been speaking and writing about human potential and peak performance since 1992. She has implemented employee productivity improvement programs at Wal-Mart, Cisco Systems, UBS, Aramark, and Bank of America. Stack presents keynotes and seminars internationally for leaders, entrepreneurs, salespeople, and professional services firms on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in the workplace.

The president of [The Productivity Pro®, Inc.](#), a time management firm specializing in high-stress environments, Stack is the bestselling author of five books: [“What to do When There’s Too Much to do” \(2012\)](#); “SuperCompetent” (2010); “The Exhaustion Cure” (2008); “Find More Time” (2006); and “Leave the Office Earlier” (2004). The 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association and recipient of the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, Stack has served as a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot. Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of employee productivity and workplace issues, Stack has been featured nationally on the CBS Early Show and CNN, and in USA Today and the New York Times.