



EXECUTIVE VITALITY: FINDING “WHITE SPACE” IN YOUR LIFE

Everyone needs down time. Do you schedule every meeting back to back—9:00 to 10:00, then 10:00 to 11:00, then 11:00 to 12:00, then a lunch meeting from 12:00 to 1:00? If you do, it is probable you are often late, unprepared, and, at a minimum, stressed.

Executives need time between meetings to regroup for the next meeting, follow up with their assistants regarding decisions made and next steps determined at the earlier meetings, and think about and prepare for the next meeting. In addition to those meeting-focused activities, executives need time to return calls, answer emails, take care of personal matters, and more.

We recommend an easy-to-implement step: Keep meetings to 45 to 50 minutes (psychoanalysts may have been onto something with the “50-minute hour”). Make sure all meetings are run with an agenda and an “agenda defender” to ensure that the meeting objectives are met and in a timely fashion.

Use the 10 or 15 minute slots in between meetings to accomplish the above, or to just sit with your door shut and either think, breathe, or rest . . . then arrive at your next meeting prepared, relaxed, and engaged. Try it for a week.

Does your organization suffer from meeting madness? What can you do to change that? Are you prepared for all meetings? Do you feel that all meetings you are involved in are productive, achieve goals, and keep to the schedule?