



# **We Can't Keep Meeting Like This: Making Meetings Productive and Effective**

**Presented by Anthony Juliano**



LET'S HAVE A LITTLE  
PREMEETING TO PREPARE  
FOR THE MEETING  
TOMORROW.



S. Adams E-mail: SCOTTADAMS@AOL.COM

WHOA! DO YOU THINK  
IT'S SAFE TO JUMP  
RIGHT INTO THE  
PREMEETING WITHOUT  
PLANNING IT?



7/5/96 © 1996 United Feature Syndicate, Inc. (NYC)

OKAY, LET'S GET THIS  
PRELIMINARY  
PREMEETING  
MEETING  
GOING.



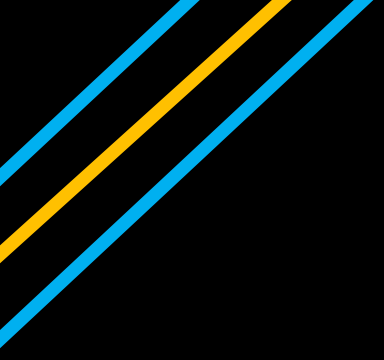


# Our conversation today

What to  
consider **before**  
the meeting...

**During**

**And after**



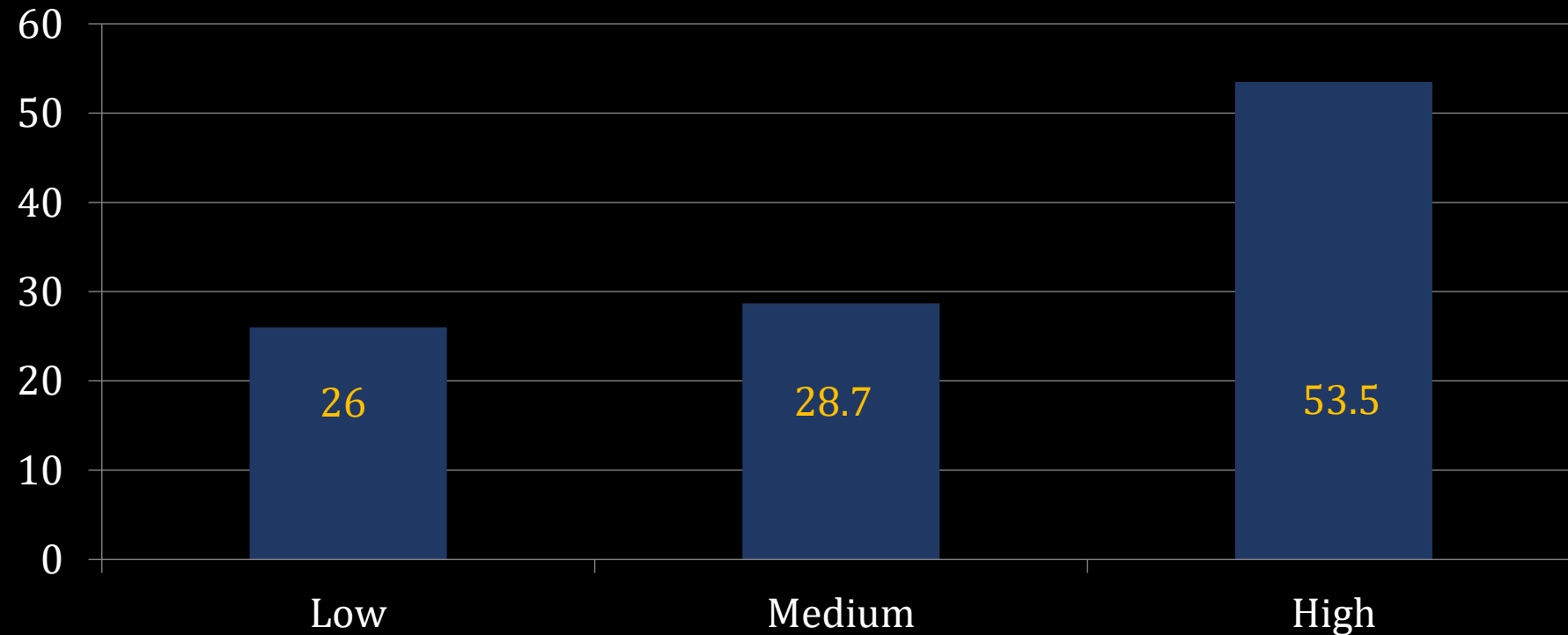
# You can be a catalyst regardless of your role

What you  
should do as  
a meeting  
facilitator/  
leader

What you  
should insist  
upon  
as a meeting  
attendee

What to consider  
**before** the meeting

# Prep time spent (minutes) vs. Perceived productivity



Source: "Meetings in America, a study of trends, costs, and attitudes toward business travel and teleconferencing, and their impact on productivity," Infocom / Verizon



# Pre-meeting considerations



Is it necessary?

**I  
SURVIVED  
ANOTHER  
MEETING  
THAT  
SHOULD  
HAVE  
BEEN AN  
EMAIL**



# Only schedule a meeting when these 3 criteria are met

A specific need/  
problem has  
been identified

Group input is  
required before  
progress can be  
made

Real-time  
communication  
is required for  
decision making

# Otherwise, consider alternatives

Email / phone  
call / text  
message /  
1-to-1 meeting

Status report /  
project  
management  
software or  
shared  
document

Polls and other  
forms of  
anonymous  
feedback



# Pre-meeting considerations (cont.)

Is it necessary?

What's the  
goal—the  
primary  
purpose?

Who's required?  
Who's optional?



# Meeting roles

Facilitator /  
timekeeper

Note taker

Subject matter  
experts

**Those not in these roles: why are they there?**

**Consider the  
costs in terms  
of money and  
missed  
opportunity**

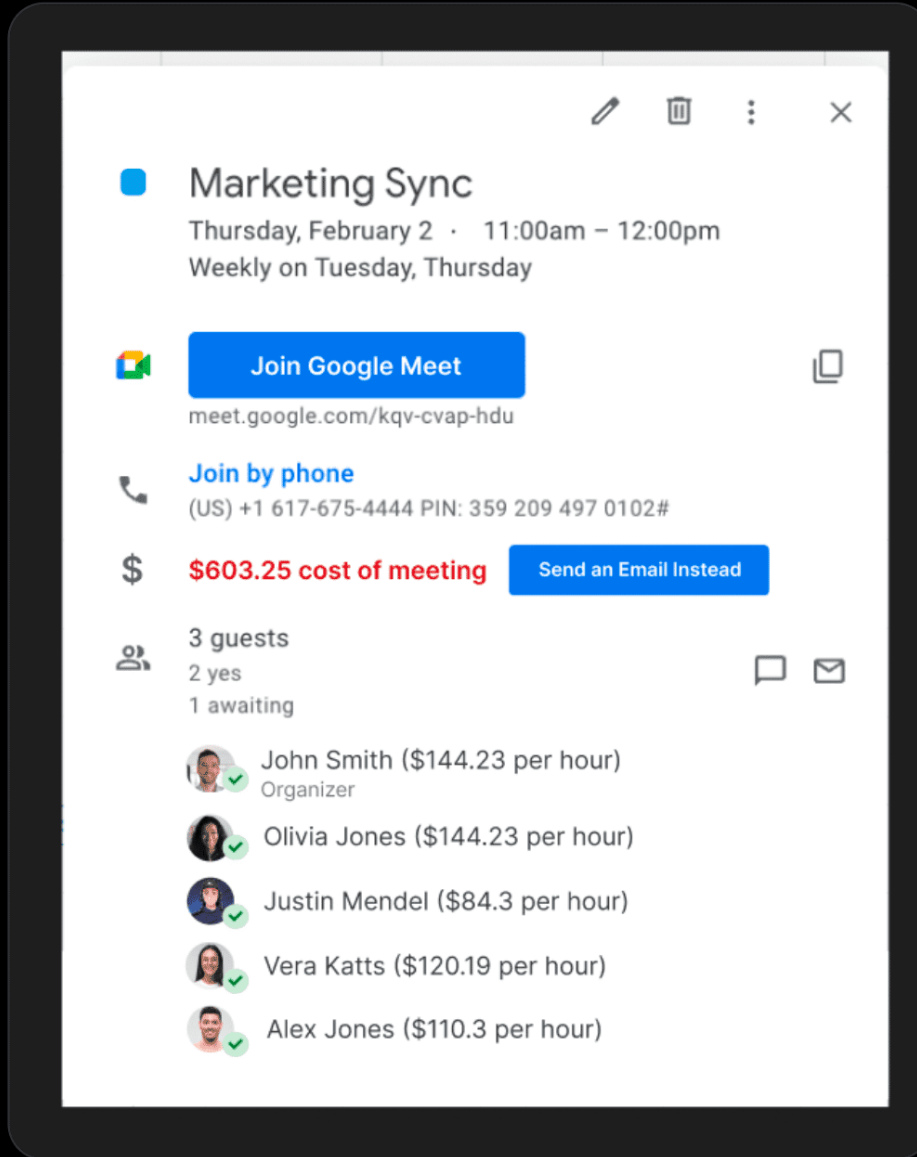




gaut   @0xgaut · Feb 1, 2023



Google Calendar, but it shows the cost of the meeting



947

14K

113K

15M





# How to “uninvite” someone

“I’ve been taking a closer look at the meetings I lead and how I can free up time for our team members. If you’d like, you can opt out of [X] meeting so you can have more time for other priorities. What are your thoughts?”

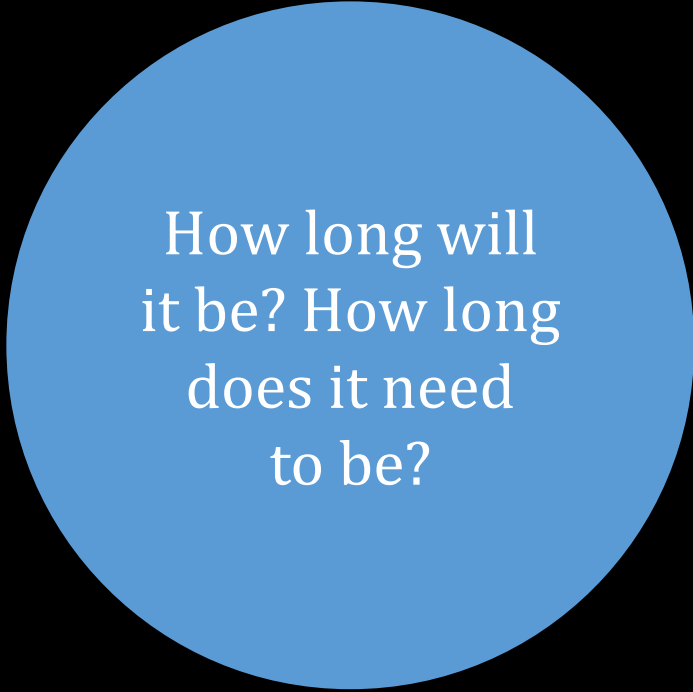


# How to “uninvite” yourself

“I’ve been taking a closer look at how I spend my time and the meetings I attend. With that in mind, I’d like to opt out of [X] meeting so I can focus on higher priorities. What are your thoughts?”



# Pre-meeting considerations (cont.)



How long will  
it be? How long  
does it need  
to be?

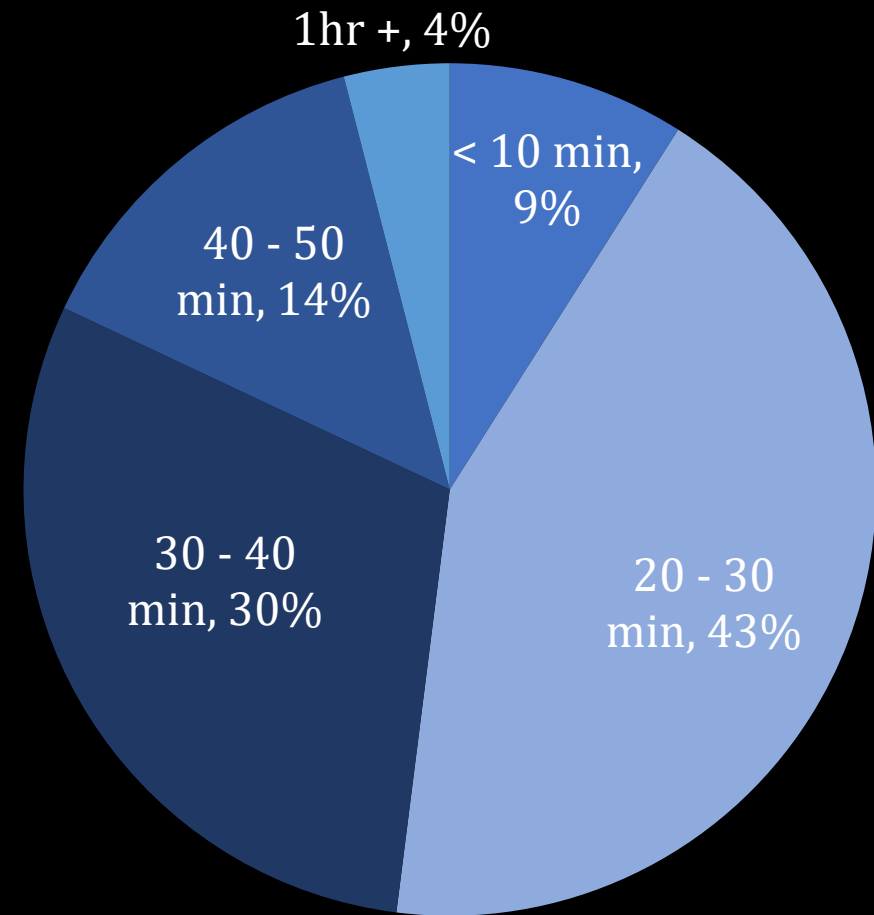


# Remember Parkinson's Law



# How long before attention wanes in meetings?

For more than half, < 30 min



Source: Atlassian

# A few considerations about meeting length

Shorter  
is usually  
better

Change  
your  
calendar  
default

Let the  
agenda be  
your guide  
(more on  
this soon)



# Pre-meeting considerations (cont.)

How long will  
it be? How long  
does it need  
to be?

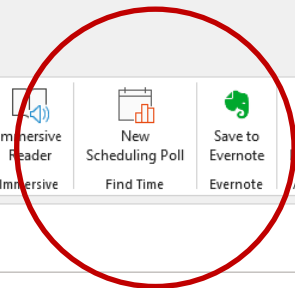
Logistics: date,  
time, location,  
and materials  
needed

**Be good to  
each other:  
account for  
buffer time  
and keep  
calendars  
updated!**



File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Help

Paste Cut Copy Format Painter Clipboard Basic Text Names Include Tags Voice Apps Sensitivity Editor Immersive Reader Immersive New Scheduling Poll Find Time Save to Evernote Evernote Viva Insights Add-in View Templates My Templates



Send

To: David Goode, Jenna Jacobs

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject:

Thanks!

**Anthony Juliano**  
Vice President/General Manager  
o 260.424.3373  
c 260.615.3426  
anthonyj@asheragency.com

asher

### Scheduling Poll

Time zone: (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Cana...)

Duration: 00:30 Meeting hours:

Date: 4/18/2024

Sort by: Availability

<input type="radio"/>	08:00 AM		⌵		
<input type="radio"/>	04:30 PM		⌵		
<b>Other times</b>					
<input type="radio"/>	04:00 PM			⌵	
<input type="radio"/>	11:00 AM			⌵	
<input type="radio"/>	11:30 AM			⌵	
<input type="radio"/>	02:30 PM			⌵	
<input type="radio"/>	09:30 AM				⌵
<input type="radio"/>	03:30 PM				⌵

# Scheduling: Technology can help!



*Separate*  
**reading  
material/  
assignments  
from the  
invite—and  
follow up!**





**When you agree to attend  
a meeting, also schedule...**



Prep time



Debrief time



# Pre-meeting considerations (cont.)

How long will  
it be? How long  
does it need  
to be?

Logistics: date,  
time, location,  
and materials  
needed

What's the  
format?

**Proceed with  
caution**



# Reasons to go virtual

Safety /  
accessibility

Cut travel time /  
costs

To be more  
equitable for  
remote team  
members: If  
anyone is  
virtual, should  
*everyone* be  
virtual?



# Reasons to meet in person

Build  
relationships

Improve  
camaraderie

Improve  
accountability  
and focus

# Two unconventional meeting formats

Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Walking meeting	Fewer distractions, chance to get outside / activity	Must be small (2-3 people), no screens / table, weather / accessibility

# Two unconventional meeting formats

Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Walking meeting	Fewer distractions, chance to get outside / activity	Must be small (2-3 people), no screens / table, weather / accessibility
Standing meeting	Brevity, informality	Must be brief, physical limitations / strain



# One more pre-meeting consideration...



The agenda

It's a "contract"  
with the  
attendees

Key details

## Agenda – [Meeting Name], [Date & time], [Location/Platform]

Primary purpose of today's meeting: [What is the main thing you want to accomplish?]

---

Purpose

Agenda items  
with time

9:00 – 9:20

[1<sup>st</sup> Topic (Who will lead the conversation?)]

- [Include other details if needed]

9:20 - 9:45 a.m.

[2<sup>nd</sup> Topic (Who will lead the conversation?)]

- [Include other details if needed]

9:45 – 9:50 a.m.

[3<sup>rd</sup> Topic (Who will lead the conversation?)]

- [Include other details if needed]

Time for recap &  
other business

9:50 – 10 a.m.

- Other business
- Recap of action items

Connection info

### Connection info:

[Include conference line/codes and any websites attendees may need to reference]

### Upcoming meetings:

[List upcoming meeting dates and times]

Upcoming  
Events



**Steven Rogelberg**

“By framing agenda items as questions, you create an engaging challenge for attendees that draws them in.”

What to consider  
**during** the meeting



# How to start strong

Arrive early to  
settle in and set  
the tone

Start on time

Reinforce the  
purpose

# Remember: the agenda is a “contract”

Recap if  
necessary—  
but put it  
on the agenda

Carefully  
adhere to the  
agenda unless  
critical items  
arise that are  
important to  
**the group**

End on time—  
a few minutes  
early if possible

# Time management

Keep meetings short! You can always schedule another if needed

If applicable: subject matter experts go first; release when their segment is complete

Use a “parking lot” for out-of-scope issues (more on this later)

# Note taking is essential

Capture electronically;  
Use the agenda as a starting point

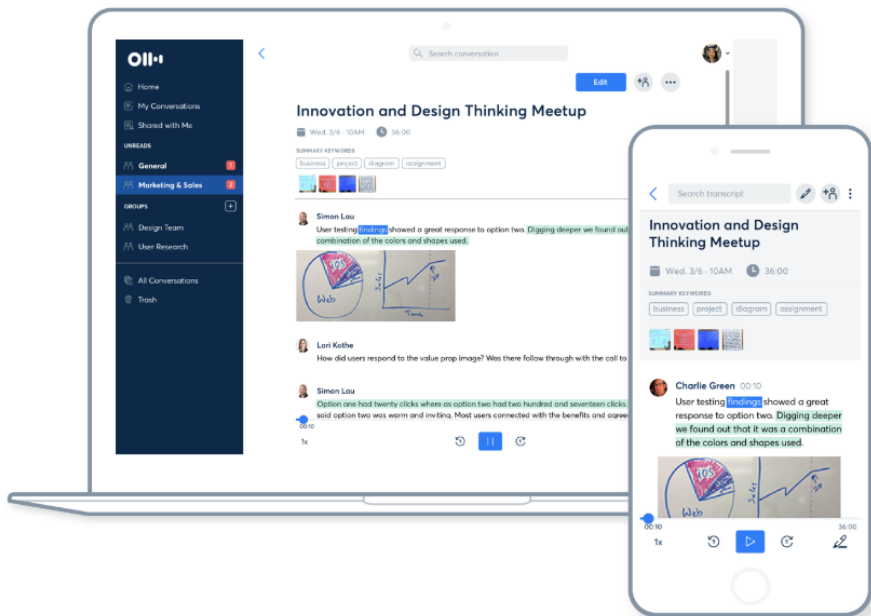
Key points and action items only!

Identify one person responsible for each action item



# A few notes about notes

Slides and recordings don't replace notes—but a transcript can help



# Otter is where conversations live

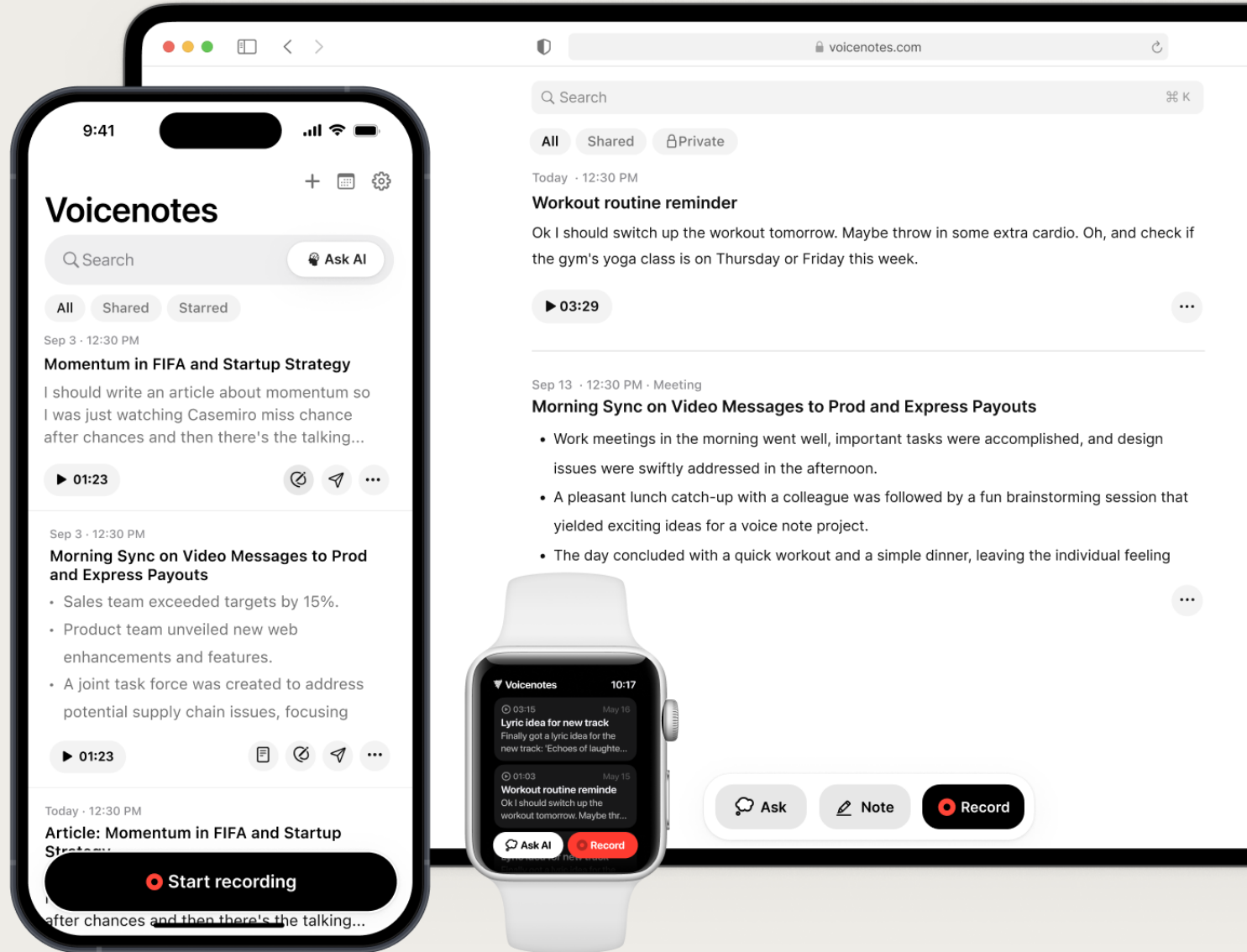
Generate rich notes for meetings, interviews, lectures, and other important voice conversations with Otter, your AI-powered assistant.

Get started





# Record notes, meetings, and Ask AI.



# A few notes about notes

Slides and recordings don't replace notes—but a transcript can help

Encourage questions from attendees and the note taker

Done beats perfect



# Facilitating better conversations

Make it  
interactive—  
*everyone* should  
have a voice



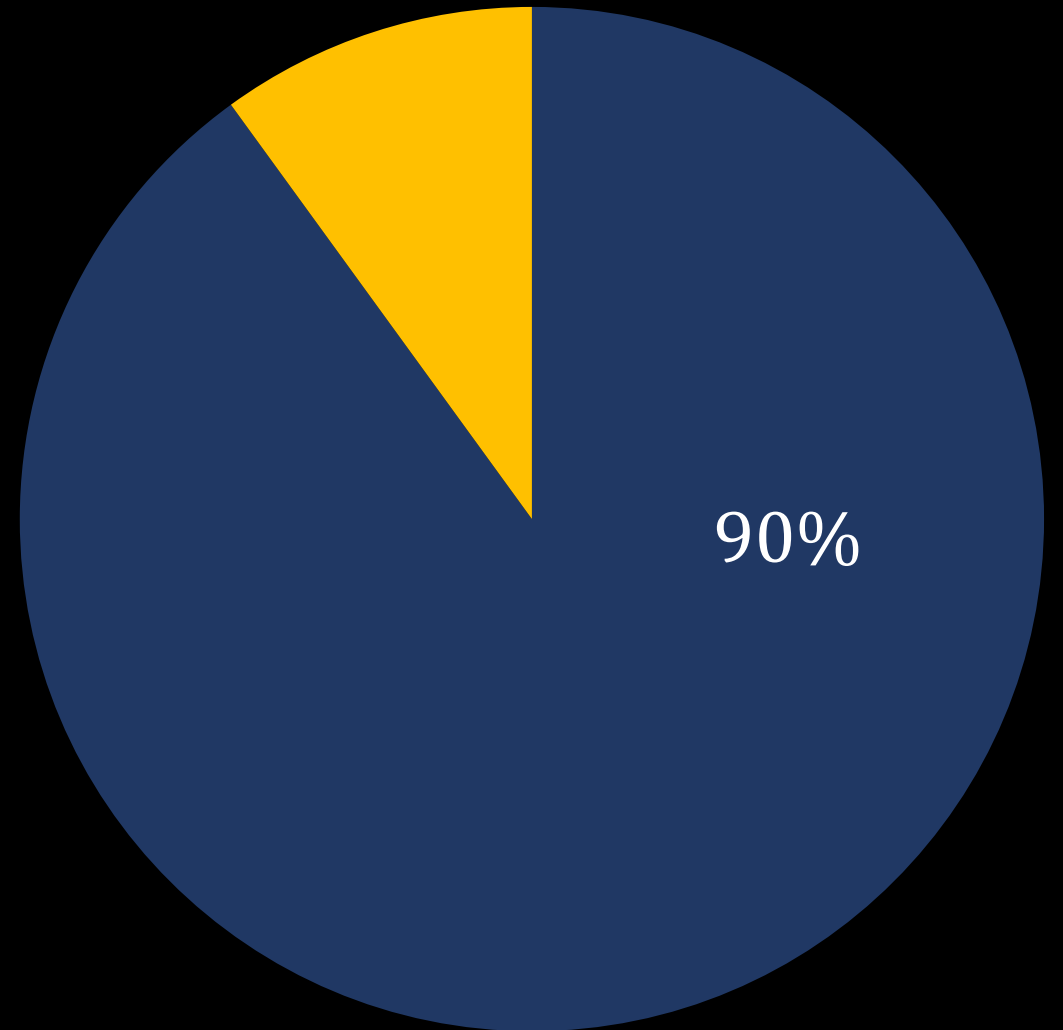
# How to make meetings interactive

Ask questions frequently

Have others lead relevant agenda items

Incorporate variety: different visuals, breakout groups, polls, etc.

**What  
percentage of  
U.S. workers  
admit to  
multitasking  
during virtual  
meetings?**



Source: Zippia

**What  
percentage of  
U.S. workers  
admit to doing  
housework?**



Source: Zippia



# How to respectfully address inattention

“There’s been a lot of multitasking during our meetings. I understand that you’re busy, but I also want to make sure everyone is engaged in the conversation so we can make good use of time. I’d like us to agree to put other, non-critical tasks aside during our meeting. What are your thoughts?”




# Facilitating better conversations

Make it interactive—*everyone* should have a voice

Recognize and *reward* respectful dissent

Ensure digressions are rare and only allowed when important to the group



# How can you avoid or divert *unproductive* conversations?

Stick to the  
agenda

(Diplomatically)  
ask the group if  
it's important to  
anyone else



# What to say

“I’d like to stick to the agenda unless others believe this topic is important to discuss now. Would anyone like to put aside the agenda and focus on [X topic]?”

# How can you avoid or divert *unproductive* conversations?

Stick to the agenda

(Diplomatically)  
ask the group if  
it's important to  
anyone else

Otherwise, offer  
alternative ways  
to continue the  
conversation

**Why do  
people persist  
with  
digressions?**





# Productive “circuit breakers”

A post-meeting  
1-to-1

Other business

The next  
meeting

# A simple way to discourage groupthink

When contentious or complex issues arise, don't seek verbal feedback. Instead...

Give participants time to privately record their thoughts, then...

Gather those recorded responses and discuss

# Set protocols: an example

Interjections  
start with a  
virtual “raised  
hand”...

...and then the  
thought is  
summarized in  
chat

What to consider  
**after** the meeting



# Keys to success

Recognize  
what was  
accomplished—  
and, if  
appropriate,  
celebrate it

Send notes out  
within 24  
working hours

Avoid “meeting  
creep”!

# Wrap up and Q & A

**Meetings  
have a bad  
reputation,  
so try  
something  
new**



**What's one  
change you'd  
like to make?**



**Thank you!**



AJJuliano@Gmail.com  
260-615-3426