



*To everyone who believes in the power of human interaction.*

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# Foreword

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We believe in people coming together to meet and interact. We also believe in the power of meetings to move processes forward. At the same time, we have identified a need for a handbook to help turn meaningless meetings into meaningful meetings. This is becoming even more important in the light of the growing concern over the thousands and thousands of wasted hours spent in terrible meetings, leading to frustration and a waste of money too.

The real shift was brought about by the pandemic. Online meetings seriously took off and the world expanded – and simultaneously shrank. Because although as humans we are all quite similar, there are also some big differences between us. Our aim in writing this book is to bring about an understanding of these differences, bridge them and create a climate for better and more respectful communication. It takes practice and you need to want to change things, but it's guaranteed to produce results. We promise.

In writing this book, lots of people have given us constructive advice and it was all turned into an actual book by a highly professional team. Many thanks to Ola Carlsson for the structure and graphic design. Thank you to Thomas Feiner and Helena Bergendahl for the brilliant icons. Thank you Peter Chadwick for constant inspiration and for sharing your expertise on the intercultural dimensions of meetings. Thanks are also due to Ardi Bouwers, Seyda Buurman-Kutsal, Charlotta Brynger, Patti McCarthy and Camilla Degerth for their constructive advice. Thanks go to Fredrik Mattsson for indefatigable editing and advice and to Anna Jöborn for valuable comments and wise input.

*Erik Mattsson*

*Pia Moberg*

*Göteborg and Brännö, August 2023*

# Introduction

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*Meeting Cookbook: Leading Meetings in a Global and Online World* is a practical handbook for doing just that. You will learn how to think about the context of your meeting, the underlying factors that affect it, the actors involved and how to design and plan a successful meeting. You will also learn how to cope with cultural differences and ensure your meetings are effective even when they are being run online.

## **WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?**

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Most of us haven't had any training in running meetings. We might be managers, team leaders or project managers but no-one ever taught us how to run a meeting. It makes no sense when this is a skill that's more important than ever in this new online landscape. We wrote this book to solve this problem and to share our best ideas and techniques for making meetings meaningful.

## **NOT ONE BOOK BUT THREE**

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*Meeting Cookbook: Leading Meetings in a Global and Online World* is the third in a series of Meeting Cookbooks.

*Meeting Cookbook I: The Basics for Effective Meetings* focuses on 30 simple Meeting methods for creating effective and inspiring meetings.

*Meeting Cookbook II* (Swedish only) contains examples of meetings, covering the structure and design of 50 common meetings.

The chairperson, sometimes called the meeting leader or moderator, is the

main person in this book. For most of us, the role of chairperson is just one of many tasks we perform at work. The rest of the time, you might be:

- a manager/leader
- a project manager/coordinator
- an HR officer
- a trainer/teacher
- a researcher/developer
- an events organiser
- a board member
- an ombudsman

You might work in the public sector, in industry or for a club or society. You could be an employee, a consultant or a volunteer.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK**

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The book begins with a chapter about the context and underlying factors affecting your meeting. This is followed by a chapter focusing on the actors or people involved. Then there is a chapter about the role of the chairperson and towards the end we take a closer look at meeting design. At the very end there is a chapter on planning meetings.



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# Frequently asked questions

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# FAQ

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If you can't find the time to read the whole book right now, we've put together some of the most common questions we get asked, telling you where in the book you can find the answer.

## HOW DO WE REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MEETINGS?

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Meetings aren't the answer to everything. Sometimes the solution is for people to get on with their work on their own. Another way to reduce the number of meetings is to question why you are doing things like running regular "Monday meetings". Your meeting needs to have a reason for happening. Not just because it's Monday. Read about the *Purpose & aims* on page 12.

## HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR MEETINGS SHORTER?

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Meetings often drag on because their aims aren't clear. Make sure you specify the purpose and aims of your meeting and communicate this ideally when sending out the invitation/meeting link. Choose the format of your meeting based on this. An hour isn't always the most optimal length for a meeting. Try different timings. Read about the *Type, time & format* of meetings on page 14.

## WHEN ARE ONLINE MEETINGS BEST?

---

Online meetings are preferable when your participants are spread over a wide geographical area, when you need to quickly check in or for decision-making meetings that don't need a long discussion. Read about *Online meetings* on page 18.

## HOW CAN YOU MAKE HYBRID MEETINGS WORK?

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Hybrid meetings, where there are people attending in the room and online, are challenging because there is a risk that the people physically present will end up with all the power. When chairing this kind of meeting, you will have to plan two parallel meetings. Read about *Hybrid meetings* on page 20.

## HOW TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE HAS THE SAME EXPECTATIONS?

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Deciding the level of formality of the meeting – which acts like a meeting dress code – means everyone will know what is expected before, during and after the meeting. Read more about *Meeting formality* on page 24.

## WHY WON'T PEOPLE SAY WHAT THEY THINK?

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One reason might be that participants come from an environment with a strong *Hierarchy* and they have different statuses in the organisation. This can make it difficult to get spontaneous discussion going. Read about *Hierarchy* on page 38.

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## HOW DO I DEAL WITH PEOPLE WHO KEEP INTERRUPTING?

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The job of the chairperson is to create a good climate in the meeting. This includes inviting people to speak and interrupting the ones who are taking up too much space. If the group includes people with different *Turn-taking* speeds (page 50), it's a good idea to set rules for how turn-taking is going to work in your meeting. Read about the *Chairperson's role & tools* on page 69.

## WHAT DO I DO IF SOMEONE GETS AGGRESSIVE IN THE MEETING?

---

Meeting participants can have different ideas about how much emotion it is appropriate to express. Try to distinguish between a desire to debate and genuine aggression. Read more about *Confrontation* on page 52.

## HOW DO I GET EVERYONE TO TURN UP AT THE MEETING?

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Always make sure there is a clear meeting agenda in the invitation/meeting link. This should also show the purpose of the meeting and what is expected of participants. This will increase the odds of them turning up. Read about *Meeting participants* on page 64.

## WHAT DO I DO ABOUT PEOPLE WHO NEVER SAY ANYTHING?

---

There can be many reasons for someone to sit in silence through a meeting. They might not think they have anything to say. It might also be because they come from an environment with high *Group loyalty* (page 44) or a strong *Hierarchy* (page 38). It's a good idea to use *Encourage* (page 91), and to make sure you give participants space to prepare, and clear instructions about where in the agenda they are expected to contribute and in what way. Read more about *Meeting participants* on page 64.

## HOW DO WE KEEP OUR FOCUS DURING THE MEETING?

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Have a break once an hour if the meeting is in person or after 45 minutes if the meeting has online participants. Also make sure there are clear *Meeting rules* (page 58) about what is expected of participants and try to incorporate variation into the meeting where you can. Read more about *Meeting methods* on page 98.

## HOW TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WHEN LANGUAGE SKILLS VARY?

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Have the courage to *Ask* (page 93) if you don't understand, and ask the person talking to *Slow down* their speaking speed (page 86) so that everyone can keep up. In the case of repeated meetings, it's a good idea to set a standard for how you can *Simplify* the language you use (page 82).



### **HOW DO I GAIN RESPECT AS THE CHAIRPERSON?**

---

Being appointed to chair a meeting isn't always enough to win the respect and trust of the people attending it. In the participants' eyes you might be the "wrong sex" or have the "wrong job title" or both. Read about the *Chairperson* on page 62.

### **HOW DO I GET PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THE RULES FOR THE MEETING?**

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One good way is to get participants set the rules together, where this is possible. Read more about *Meeting rules* on page 58.

### **HOW DO I MAKE THE MEETING AGENDA MORE FLEXIBLE?**

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If you structure your meeting using *Meeting modules* (page 96) which you then fill with content such as *Meeting methods* (page 98), it's easy to add or remove the odd module if the situation changes over the course of the meeting.

### **HOW DO I GET PARTICIPANTS TO BE MORE ACTIVE?**

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As the chairperson, you need to get creative and use *Meeting methods* (page 98) to involve and inspire participants. You can also work actively to *Encourage* your participants (page 91) and *Ask* them (page 93). Read about *Dialogue methods* on page 88.

### **HOW CAN I FIND TIME TO PREPARE WHEN I'M CHAIRING A MEETING?**

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Preparing a meeting takes time so we need to set aside time for that. This is one of your key tasks if you frequently run meetings. Leading meetings is like other skills, the more you practise, the better you get at it and the quicker your preparations will be. Read about the *The chairperson's role & tools* on page 69 onwards.

### **HOW DO I TAKE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK ON BOARD WITHOUT FEELING HURT?**

---

We have to take the risk of asking for feedback if we want to develop and improve. One way of benefitting from negative criticism without getting upset is to ask for specific feedback on your role, e.g. your role as the chairperson. Then remember that the feedback isn't about who you are as a person, it's about how good you are at that role. Read more in the chapter *Play a role* on page 70.

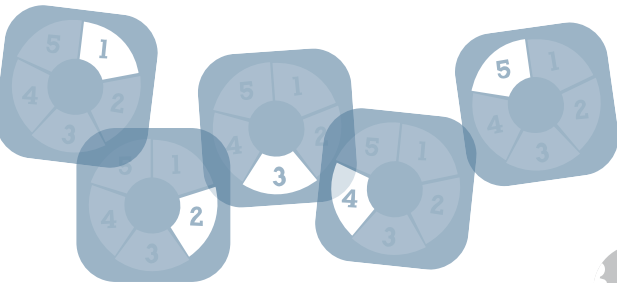


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# Meeting context

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Purpose & aims ■ Type, time & format  
Meeting formality ■ Cultural context  
Meeting rules





# Hierarchy



Hierarchy is about how we exercise leadership and followership. It's about how we see the power relationship between us. How important are titles?

## WEAK HIERARCHY

Having a weak *Hierarchy* means that there is a short distance between you the employee and your manager. Employees and managers communicate freely. The words of the manager don't weigh any heavier than anyone else's. Coaching leadership is often advocated when the organisation is flat and equal. A culture with weak *Hierarchy* is characterised by the employees being encouraged to take their own initiative and being expected to provide feedback on themselves and their workplace.

Position and rank are not very important in an environment with weak *Hierarchy*. People address each other by their first names and tend not to mention anyone's actual titles.

When problems arise in these environments, the problem is often sent back downwards in the hierarchy. Solving the problem yourself rather than taking it to your manager is seen as something positive.

## STRONG HIERARCHY

Having a strong *Hierarchy* means that the pecking order is clear. In this kind

of environment, you don't criticise your superior. There are often external markers of position and rank. And strict rules about who is allowed to communicate with whom. It is not usual to take your own initiative rather than waiting for instructions. Hierarchical environments involve a lot of external markers such as:

- CLOTHING
- SIZE OF COMPANY CAR AND ITS ACCESSORIES
- LOCATION AND DECORATION OF OFFICE
- EXCLUSIVELY PRINTED BUSINESS CARDS
- SEAT AT MEETING, IN CAR OR AT THE NEGOTIATION TABLE
- SEPARATE TOILET OR COFFEE MACHINE

The approach to hierarchy is also clearly visible in how people send emails, and especially in the order of people on the CC list. The recipient often reads the CC list before reading the email itself.

The health sector, uniformed

careers (army, police, fire brigade) and faith communities are usually hierarchical. So is academia, where the order in which authors of an academic article are listed is extremely important.

When problems arise in hierarchical cultures, as a rule they are passed on to the line manager. Asking your manager for help is not seen as a weakness or as abandoning personal responsibility. Instead it shows you are taking responsibility for mutual dependence and are aware of the different levels of management in the organisation. What you need to be careful about is getting in touch with a manager several levels higher up because this means you are not respecting your line manager.

Strong *Hierarchy* is more common in relationship cultures than in performance cultures.

## **HOW DO I DEAL WITH STRONG HIERARCHY IN MEETINGS?**

### **Let participants choose how they want to be addressed**

In intercultural teams, it's a good idea to let participants themselves say how they want to be addressed: first name, last name or titles?

Because a title at a certain level acts as an entry pass, people need them in order to exercise leadership or even communicate.

How people address each other with titles and relate to the hierarchy in the organisation can also be generational. The younger generation in

“*When I said I intended starting to cycle to work, my Chinese colleagues were horrified. They said our department was important ‘because the manager has a room on the top floor and comes to work in a BMW with a private chauffeur.’”*

Swedish top manager in China  
(weak *Hierarchy* meets strong)



# Dialogue methods

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Online meetings, language barriers and complex topics are all things that can make communication tricky. But there is hope. In this chapter we introduce a number of dialogue methods that will help you to encourage dialogue even when the circumstances aren't ideal.

## WHAT'S HINDERING COMMUNICATION?

---

In today's world of meetings, there are lots of things that can make communication difficult. It might be the technology, the fact we're meeting online, are speaking different languages or operating from different cultural frameworks.

For some people, the status of a participant might be the thing that makes understanding possible or impossible. For someone else, *Group loyalty* might be preventing them from interacting.

## HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER DESPITE THIS?

---

There are jobs where communication has to work even if we don't have the same native language or the same cultural references. Pilots are one such group. One tiny communication failure between a pilot and air traffic control (ATC) puts lives at stake. Pilots around the world have agreed to use a simplified, formalised version of English. Global air traffic works very well because the communication is clearly defined. You don't need to be able to recite Shakespeare or score top marks in an English grammar test to be a

pilot. What you need to know is the standard that the International Civil Aviation Organisation has decided on for communication between pilots and ATC.

There is no such agreement in the global business world, although perhaps there ought to be.

In international groups English tends to be the language we communicate in. For many people, that means expressing themselves in their second or third language. And on top of that they have to try to understand the people in the group who are speaking a different kind of English to the one they are used to in terms of tempo, intonation and vocabulary.

A CEO at one of Sweden's biggest companies said proudly that their Group language was "Bad English". The important thing wasn't that the language was perfect but making oneself understood. The message was that it's far more important to be able to communicate with each other than to speak grammatically perfect and idiomatic English.

Once we accept that the whole point of language is communicating – not showing off – we can start to tackle other factors that make communication difficult, such as cultural

differences, online meetings or technical challenges in the communication process.

## **DIALOGUE METHODS FACILITATE UNDERSTANDING**

Dialogue methods are techniques that facilitate understanding, leading to a genuine dialogue. We've divided them up into transmission methods and facilitating methods. Transmission methods are mainly for when you're talking and facilitation methods are for helping others to talk. Who is talking and who is listening will obviously be changing constantly through the conversation.

Once you are familiar with the dialogue methods, you can switch between them smoothly to facilitate dialogue in meetings where communication isn't flowing.

### **Transmission methods**

- SIMPLIFY
- REPEAT
- SPLIT UP
- SIGNPOST
- SLOW DOWN
- DESCRIBE
- SHOW

### **Facilitation methods**

- INTRODUCE
- ENCOURAGE
- MIRROR
- TALKBACK
- ASK

*“I thought I was quite good at English but our British boss made it difficult to keep up with all the in-jokes and plays on words. Our colleagues from the Middle East and Asia who didn't share the same sense of humour found it impossible. When at the end he asked if we understood, we all said ‘yes’ just so we could end the meeting.”*

Employee in a global company



# TRANSMISSION METHODS

*The following dialogue methods are mainly used when you want to transmit a message yourself.*

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## Simplify

### ■ NATIVE SPEAKERS

face a particular challenge in a mixed group as they are used to being able to use all the subtleties of their own language. If you don't speak any languages other than your own, it can be hard to even imagine how much you need to simplify to make what you are saying comprehensible to everyone.

### ■ IRONY IS

confusing if you don't know each other well. There's a risk that ambiguity will upset meeting participants.

■ **THE AMOUNT** of simplification will entirely depend on the group. If everyone has the same professional background, jargon and specialist vocabulary work fine.

### DESCRIPTION

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*Simplify* is about using understandable words, sentences and expressions – even when you are talking about something complex or using your second language. What is understandable of course will depend on the people you are talking to.

### VARIATIONS

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#### **Use comprehensible words**

Try to:

- avoid internal jargon or vocabulary
- avoid long and complex words

#### **Use comprehensible sentences**

Try to:

- avoid unnecessarily long sentences
- avoid tag questions (e.g. "let's go home, shall we?")

#### **Use comprehensible expressions**

Many terms and abbreviations are internal and many sayings and expressions are national, try to

- avoid internal abbreviations
- avoid sayings and "common" expressions
- avoid idiomatic expressions (e.g. "the proof of the pudding")
- avoid irony

#### **Use nouns instead of verbs**

- say "who's your boss?" rather than "who do you work for?"
- say "what's the price?" rather than "what does it cost?"





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# Meeting design

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Meeting modules ■ Meeting methods



# Meeting modules

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A really good meeting is well planned from beginning to end. So far we've talked about the context surrounding the meeting and the actors involved. Now it's time to produce a design that suits the purpose and goals of your meeting.

## MEETING MODULES

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All meetings are made up of elements which we call meeting modules. Some of the most important meeting modules are:

- CHECK-IN
- INTRODUCTION
- REPORT
- DISCUSSION
- GENERATING IDEAS
- PRESENTATION
- REFLECTION
- VOTING
- CHOOSING FACILITATOR
- DECISION-MAKING
- CONCLUSION
- CHECK-OUT

You can then fill each meeting module with different content, see, e.g. *Meeting methods* (page 98).

## THE BENEFITS OF BUILDING MEETINGS OUT OF MODULES

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As the chairperson, it makes it easier to be able to extend or shorten the meeting quickly and smoothly if the circumstances change. As they often do. The participants might be more active than you expected or the time available might have changed for some

reason. In such circumstances it helps if the meeting is modular so you can take elements away or add them in if you need to.

## HOW DO I USE MEETING MODULES EFFECTIVELY?

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You need to do the following five things to work effectively when building your meeting.

### **Build on previous meetings**

When planning your meeting, think about whether there are results, evaluations or other things from previous meetings that might affect the structure and planning of your meeting.

### **Prioritise in advance**

If the meeting is informal, you can make fairly major changes as it goes along. It's a good idea to have decided before the meeting starts which modules you will need to get through and which ones you can drop if necessary. Decide on an introduction and a conclusion.

If you plan for the necessary modules to take up a maximum of three-quarters of the time, you will have the freedom to experiment with different variations depending on the needs and wishes that arise. Put the important elements first so you definitely have time for them.

The more formal the meeting is, the less scope you have for flexibility, but despite that, it always makes sense to build in a small amount of flexibility. It's always worth having a plan B.

**Always prepare a bit extra**

If the meeting has some flexibility, it's worth preparing a few more modules than you expect to use. This means you can add a module if you want to go into more detail or otherwise modify your original structure. Preparing more than you might use has the side-effect that you will be forced to think a bit more about the meeting you're going to chair. That provides more reassurance.

**Plan the conclusion first**

Check how much time you need for the conclusion module. That way, you'll know that when the time is approaching the end, you can jump straight to that module – and finish on time. Never tell the participants that you skipped a module. Saying “I'd thought we'd get more done...” means ending with an anti-climax.

**Plan for the next step**

In the planning phase, make sure you've got a recipient for the results of the meeting. And make space at the end of the meeting to check everyone knows what they need to do before the next meeting.

“*I remember when it was the third time we were asked to suggest how we could improve the annual kick-off. Because no-one in the management had even taken the time to read what we had written before, we stopped sharing our ideas.*”

# Meeting methods

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We've developed a number of Meeting methods that can be used to create interactive meetings. The Meeting methods are an important part of the meeting leader's toolkit and are used to bring the meeting modules to life. The Meeting methods have different functions and can be used in most kinds of meetings. Let's look at some of them in more detail.

## MEETING METHODS ARE ACTIVITIES

---

There are lots of techniques that can be used to bring a meeting to life. This book's sister volume Meeting Cookbook I: *The Basics for Effective Meetings* describes 30 fundamental *Meeting methods*. The methods are divided into the following functions:

- **DISCUSS**
- **INVOLVE**
- **INSPIRE**
- **PROCESS**
- **VALUE**

The book contains step-by-step instructions for using the methods. In *Meeting Cookbook II* (Swedish only) you then learn to create more complex meetings, everything from business planning and business intelligence to teambuilding and evaluation by combining the *Meeting methods*.

## ALL THE METHODS ARE IN THE MEETINGPLANNER APP

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All the methods are in our *Meeting-Planner* app (see [meetingplanner.ordrum.app](http://meetingplanner.ordrum.app)) which is free to use. It also tells you more about the methods and how to use them.

## MEETING METHODS SUITABLE FOR ONLINE AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

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Some of the *Meeting methods* are especially helpful in the online and global meeting landscape. On the following pages, we take a deeper dive into these methods and give you tips and advice on what you need to think about when using them.

Every *Meeting method* is introduced under a meeting module it works well for. On the following pages, we present some of the methods that work especially well in the global and online meeting landscape.

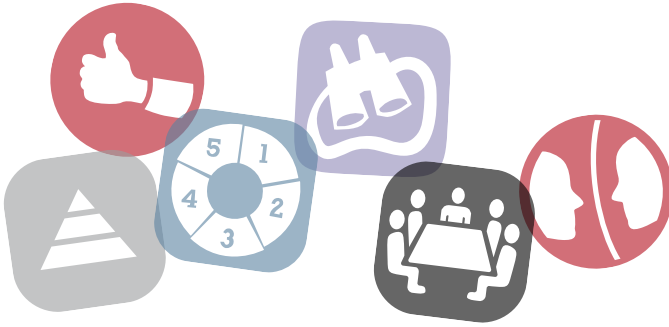
These are all the 30 *Meeting methods*. The methods are described in detail in *Meeting Cookbook I* and in the app *MeetingPlanner* (see below).



Use the QR-code to open **MeetingPlanner** or go to <https://meetingplanner.ordrum.app>.







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# Meeting preparations

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The process ■ Examples of meetings



# The process

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What do you think about when planning a meeting? In this chapter we show how you can apply the things you have learned in this book. We also offer some examples of actual meetings.

## THE CONTEXT OF THE MEETING

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The first question you should ask yourself when you're thinking of calling a meeting is why. What is the purpose of the meeting and what are its actual aims? If you are finding it hard to think of a purpose or aims, maybe you shouldn't be having a meeting at all. Meetings are not the answer to everything.

Then decide on an appropriate meeting format (in-person, online or hybrid) based on the purpose and aims. If the participants are widespread geographically, an online meeting will of course be your only option.

To make what is expected of them in terms of preparation and attitude during the meeting clear to the participants it's important that you decide the level of formality.

Then you need to ask yourself whether cultural considerations are going to come into play. Do participants have different ideas about e.g. *Hierarchy* (page 38) or *Clarity* (page 54)? Might interaction during the meeting be affected by *Group loyalty* (page 42)? And do we have different ideas about the level of *Confrontation* (page 52) that's acceptable? Read about *Cultural context* on page 32.

Maybe there are grounds to draw up some specific meeting rules to tackle our differing cultural frameworks. And if there are, it's best to tell people about these rules when sending out the invitation. If there are no rules, maybe its time the group itself produced some.

## ACTORS

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You need to know what your position is. Have you been chosen and do you have a sufficient mandate for the meeting you will be leading? If it's a big conference, if the topic is sensitive or the team is in conflict, it might be better to bring in an external chairperson. Who will be invited to attend? What are the relations like between members of the team? If the meeting is going to make decisions, it's important to make sure the people coming have a mandate to do so.

All participants must be sent an invitation that describes the purpose of the meeting, its aims and what they themselves need to do (page 75).

Will the meeting need other supporters? Go through the list of supporters (page 68) and check that you haven't missed out a function that might improve the meeting or make it run more smoothly.

## THE CHAIRPERSON'S JOB

As the chairperson, you need to have the right skills, both for the specific meeting you are chairing and in chairing meetings in general. These will obviously vary depending on the meeting you are running.

As we have seen earlier in the book, the chairperson has several roles to keep track of, both as the chairperson and as a presenter. Prepare by going through which roles you are going to play and the duties you have. Are you on top of which presentations will be given during the meeting and how long they are going to take? Will the people giving the presentations bring their own laptops (if the meeting is in-person) or do you want all the material in advance so you can be more in control of the timing and the technology?

When it comes to actually running the meeting, it will be really helpful to go through the dialogue methods (page 80) that might be useful during the meeting. If the meeting is international and the common language is not your native language, you can improve the dialogue by using *Simplify* (page 82) and *Split up* (page 84) to break the message into smaller chunks. Always *Signpost* (page 85) the transitions during the meeting.

The dialogue methods *Repeat* (page 83), *Encourage* (page 91) and *Talkback* (page 94) are useful to create mutual interaction between you as the chairperson and the participants.

## MEETING DESIGN

Produce a simple running order. Build the meeting using *Meeting modules* (page 96). If you have other modules than the ones in this book, use those too.

Where necessary, you can fill the meeting modules with appropriate *Meeting methods* (page 98) that create interaction and unleash the creativity of your participants. Set times for the different items and mark the level of formality of each one so participants can easily see what is expected of them.

You can use our free online tool *MeetingPlanner* to design your meeting. You can find the app at [meeting-planner.ordrum.app](http://meeting-planner.ordrum.app).

# Examples of meetings

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Below are some examples of common meetings and how to approach them in terms of the tools, methods and other things you have learned in this book.

## **PURPOSE**

Moving forward in a process

## **AIM**

Work out the next step

## **FORMAT**

In-person/online

## **LENGTH**

2 hours

## **TYPE**

Process meeting

## **FORMALITY**

Low (2)

## **CHAIRPERSON**

Project manager

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Project group

## **SUPPORTERS**

None

## **SOME IMPORTANT...**

### **- MEETING MODULES**

Check-in, Generating ideas, Check-out

### **- MEETING METHODS**

Upside-Down, Brainstorm, Adventure, Talking Wall, Relay Race

### **- DIALOGUE METHODS**

Introduce, Encourage, Ask, Repeat

## **Brainstorming meeting**

The purpose of the meeting is to move forward in a process by being creative together. The aim is to have produced concrete next steps by the end of the meeting. The format is in person or online depending on which people are in the office. It works best with a group that already know each other. For this reason, we need to start with an opportunity to get to know each other and chat informally at the start of the meeting – especially if many of the participants come from *relationship cultures*. The meeting is chaired by the project manager

As we sometimes have participants with strong *Group loyalty*, we pay especial attention to sending out as much material as we possibly can ahead of time, because they always have preliminary meetings with each other before our joint meetings. Because some in the group are from an engineering background with high *Factfocus*, we need to agree on the data we are taking into the meeting when the invitation goes out. As some of the participants are from a strong *Hierarchy* environment, we use *Grouping* so that people with the same status end up in the same group.

Because the meeting is creative and participants will be discussing and imagining different opportunities and perspectives, several meeting methods are used, including *Upside-Down* and *Adventure*. All the ideas are gathered together on an online *Talking Wall*. At the end there is a *Relay Race* so that the work carries on once the meeting is over. The chairperson plays a key role, especially when the meeting is online. *Encourage* and *Ask* are important dialogue methods. *Repeat* is useful as a check-out at the end of the meeting.



# Authors

PHOTO: OLA KJELBYE



**ERIK MATSSON** is a CEO, trainer, moderator and founder of Ordrum AB. He wrote *Meeting Cookbook I* and *II*, *Speaker's Cookbook* and edited *Skrivarkokboken* (for writers in Swedish). He has also developed an online/in-person 30-day programme on presentation techniques. Erik teaches PhD students presentation skills at Chalmers University of Technology and previously taught rhetoric at Uppsala University. He lectures on a number of leadership programmes and has moderated a large number of conferences over the years. His educational background includes a degree

in political science plus rhetoric, mathematics, economic history and physics. He has been hired by numerous companies, local government, county councils, organisations, universities and government agencies in Sweden and abroad. Clients include the Swedish Bar Association, SKF, Volvo, the Government Offices of Sweden, Scania, SSAB, IKEA, the Swedish Tax Agency and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

“*The best bit of my job is getting to visit so many different worlds. I love it when a client says: ‘Come on in behind the counter, we don’t usually let our suppliers in here.’ Then I know I’m going to see something exciting and when they then say: ‘This is a very special business,’ I know we’re on the same wavelength. All of us are special.*”

PHOTO: THOMAS FEINER



**PIA MOBERG** is the founder of the company Japco. Focusing on cultural awareness, she trains, coaches and inspires companies and organisations. She has a PhD in Japanology from the University of Gothenburg and is a trained leadership and business coach. Pia has written the books *Etikett och kommunikation i Japan*, *Foolproof International Communication*, *Meeting Sense* and a number of articles and chapters on Japan, CQ (cultural intelligence), leadership, comparative rhetoric and meeting effectiveness. Customers including Volvo Group, IKEA, ABB Hitachi and the City

of Gothenburg have hired Pia to train experts in culture, provide advice on intercultural issues and to run development days for multicultural teams. Pia has previously lectured at the University of Gothenburg and taught business culture, Japanese culture and society, Japanese calligraphy and academic writing. She also runs an Aikido club and holds a 6 dan black belt.

“*When I see the people on my courses crack the code to greater cultural understanding, it’s an amazing feeling! My drive comes from constantly looking for the right keys to that lightbulb moment that will see us moving forward in our inter-personal encounters. Being able to share my joy of discovery with other people and gain an insight into their worlds is incredibly inspiring.*”