

# GROUND RULES FOR PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Ground rules are the foundation of productive meetings. Using ground rules, teams can establish norms for what is – and is not – acceptable communication and create healthy environments in which to work together and deal with tough issues. We recommend that every team adopt ground rules similar to these to ensure productive meetings.

1. Provide timely agendas and synopses.
2. Keep discussions focused (make sure everyone knows the topic).
3. Eliminate interruptions (put gadgets away or place in silent mode).
4. Focus on one speaker at a time (avoid side conversations).
5. Use “I” statements; put yourself in all interactions.
6. Explain the reasoning leading to your conclusions.
7. Identify assumptions – yours and other people’s.
8. Manage your airtime (follow the “30-second rule”).<sup>1</sup>
9. Bring issues to the table (avoid “back room” discussions).
10. Make “undiscussable” ideas discussable (identify your “inner scripts”).<sup>2</sup>
11. Participate fully (silence means consent).
12. Clarify decision-making responsibilities.
13. Monitor and observe your ground rules.

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<sup>1</sup> Thirty seconds is typically enough time to make a point; please be considerate of others’ airtime.

<sup>2</sup> When an issue dominates your inner thoughts, it’s an “inner script.” It is best framed as a dilemma.