

Transcript | How to Make Meetings More Productive

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00:00:09.690 --> 00:00:12.479

Callie Bradley: Hello, everyone, and welcome!

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00:00:12.910 --> 00:00:20.590

Callie Bradley: I will just give people a few minutes to join. You are in the right place.

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00:00:21.440 --> 00:00:31.089

Callie Bradley: Hi, everyone. Welcome to this panel event on how to make meetings more productive. My name is Callie, and I'm an event producer here at Apolitical.

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Callie Bradley: It would be great to hear from all of you, so please do post in the chat where you're joining us from and what organization you work for.

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Callie Bradley: Today, we will explore how to plan and run more effective meetings by setting clear intentions up front, structuring discussions around meaningful outcomes, and ensuring every conversation ends with strong accountability and next steps.

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00:00:53.860 --> 00:00:57.709

Callie Bradley: For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, welcome.

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Callie Bradley: Apolitical is the world's largest online network of public servants used by half a million public servants and policymakers across 170 countries.

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Callie Bradley: Apolitical is a strategic partner to governments, helping them prepare their workforces for the future.

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Callie Bradley: We achieve this by upscaling government workforces through short online courses focused on government priorities, enabling them to find and share best practice through peer communities, and by building innovative tools designed for and with governments.

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Callie Bradley: I am going to take a look at the chat and see who we have in the virtual room today. Wow, okay, Bristol, Wales. Hello, Neil from Wales.

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00:01:39.850 --> 00:01:53.739

Callie Bradley: Toronto, Dublin, Edmonton... wow, we have a lot of Canadians on the call. We have London. We are here in London today, or at least I am.

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00:01:53.850 --> 00:02:06.039

Callie Bradley: So, welcome, and... oh, Trinidad in Tobago, I'm sure you're having better weather than we are, even though we're having a lovely early spring here in London. Welcome, everybody.

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Callie Bradley: So, we are thrilled to extend an invitation to you all to join today's speakers and your peers in public service from across the globe in the life and government community.

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Callie Bradley: Whether you're a new public servant or a seasoned pro, this forum is the place to share resources, ask questions, and gain collective wisdom from your peers on all aspects of life and government, including leading and contributing to productive meetings.

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Callie Bradley: The link is in the resources tab at the bottom of your screen, and my colleague is also posting a link in the chat now. Do take a look, and we'd love to see your voice in there.

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00:02:43.380 --> 00:02:49.670

Callie Bradley: I will get a few technical notes out of the way before we get into today's conversation.

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00:02:49.820 --> 00:02:56.289

Callie Bradley: This event is recorded for on-demand viewing on the Apolitical website, so please don't record it yourself.

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Callie Bradley: Contact details for privacy concerns are in the apolitical homepage footer.

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Callie Bradley: Closed captions are available and can be toggled on or off in your screen settings.

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00:03:07.310 --> 00:03:15.829

Callie Bradley: Alright, before we introduce our speakers, we are going to run a quick poll to get a sense of where you're coming to today's discussion from.

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00:03:16.440 --> 00:03:24.860

Callie Bradley: So, the question is, what's the biggest challenge that you face with meetings in your role?

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Callie Bradley: That should have just popped up on your screen, so take a second to read through the answer choices. Maybe it's too many meetings fill my calendar. Meetings lack a clear purpose or agenda. Meetings run over time or go off-topic.

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00:03:40.600 --> 00:03:44.650

Callie Bradley: Poor follow-up and unclear next steps, or if it's something else.

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00:03:44.760 --> 00:03:47.980

Callie Bradley: Please share with us in the chat.

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00:03:49.090 --> 00:03:56.160

Callie Bradley: Alright, looks like we have... Not such a clear winner yet, so keep voting.

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00:03:56.330 --> 00:04:06.349

Callie Bradley: And I will let you know... oh, it is neck and neck right now between meetings run over time or go off-topic and poor follow-up and unclear next steps.

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00:04:06.660 --> 00:04:25.689

Callie Bradley: Oh, and looks like we have a winner just by a little bit, and that is meetings run over time or go off-topic. Yes, that can be very frustrating, but luckily for you, our panel today is going to address exactly that issue.

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Callie Bradley: Alright.

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Callie Bradley: So, thank you guys so much for taking part in those polls, and now I'm going to introduce our speakers.

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Callie Bradley: We are fortunate to have 3 brilliant guests joining us today.

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Callie Bradley: Kieran Carillon, Alana Moncton, And Marius Mullerch.

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Callie Bradley: Kiran is program manager at the International Civil Aviation Organization, a United Nations agency in Montreal, Canada.

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00:04:58.140 --> 00:05:05.080

Callie Bradley: He coordinates a global community comprising governments, international and regional organizations, and the private sector.

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00:05:05.360 --> 00:05:18.360

Callie Bradley: With 18 years of experience in international settings, he is accustomed to steering conversations in technical, administrative, and political meetings with diverse participants to achieve agreements and drive program advancement.

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00:05:18.600 --> 00:05:19.949

Callie Bradley: Welcome, Kieran.

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Callie Bradley: Alana Moncton is VP of Growth at Apolitical, and Community Lead for Apolitical's Neurodiversity and Public Service Community.

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00:05:28.950 --> 00:05:33.730

Callie Bradley: She is responsible for growing Apolitical's global network of public servants and policymakers.

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Callie Bradley: She is an experienced digital marketer, business strategist, and leader with over 15 years of experience managing teams. Prior to joining APolitical, she worked at Edinburgh-based health and social care startup CareSourcer and the global travel website Skyscanner. Welcome, Alana.

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Callie Bradley: And lastly, we have Marius Muller, who is a consultant and facilitator who helps leaders and teams navigate complex change through human-centered engagement and effective collaboration.

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Callie Bradley: He holds an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School and brings a background in leadership and organizational development.

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Callie Bradley: Marius designs and facilitates workshops where dialogue, structure, and presence enable better decision-making and meaningful participation.

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00:06:17.670 --> 00:06:19.200

Callie Bradley: Welcome, Marius.

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Callie Bradley: Before we launch into today's panel, I thought we could start with a quick icebreaker question just to get us warmed up.

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Callie Bradley: So, Kiran, Alana, and Marius, what's your biggest meeting pet peeve?

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Callie Bradley: I will give you a moment to think, and everyone else, I pose the same question to you, and I would love for you to share your answers in the chat.

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Callie Bradley: Alright, I will come to you first, Marius. What is your biggest meeting pet peeve?

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Marius Möhler: I think I... I get quite frustrated when a meeting has actually achieved its goal, and people still cling on the exact initial, let's say, deadline of the, like, timing of the meeting, and then you just hang out there for another 5 or 10 minutes.

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00:07:08.050 --> 00:07:15.980

Marius Möhler: And you actually know... actually, we could have ended here, and everyone could have taken, I don't know, a break or a coffee, so that's something that drives me crazy.

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00:07:16.740 --> 00:07:36.000

Callie Bradley: Yeah, that can be very frustrating. I think we've all experienced those meetings where, you know, it just seems like everyone is pushing through just to get to the end of the allotted time, and yeah, it would be great to be able to just leave once we've accomplished what we need to accomplish. So, totally get that. Let's go to you next, Alana.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Thank you so much, Callie. Interestingly, I think on a similar note, my peeve is about meetings generally that are just longer than necessary. For me, I'm coming to this from a place of attention span, and meeting design, and I say this as someone who is neurodivergent, and I wanted to bring that additional perspective to this topic. And I actually asked a political neurodiversity community about neurodivergent meeting pet peeves.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Just to kind of bring that voice to today's conversation, and attention span is one of the things that absolutely came up in a lot of the comments. I think we're going to actually link to the chat, because I think there's some really interesting conversation happening

there when we think about meetings that are inclusive and work for everyone, so feel free to kind of join us there.

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Callie Bradley: Great, thanks, Alana, and yeah, we're already getting some people in the chat chiming in and agreeing with you. And Kieran, what about you? What is your biggest meeting pet peeve?

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Ciaran Carolan: Yeah, for me, it's the frustration that arises from

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Ciaran Carolan: you know, a fairly large meeting, maybe quite a few people in it, and half the people are sitting there, maybe on their laptops, browsing their emails, checking different things, and there's a couple of people maybe on the side having a conversation. And, you know, the thing concludes, and maybe a handful of people have spoken, but most people, you wonder.

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Ciaran Carolan: why they have been there, because this means that things have gone wrong in the planning. Either the purpose of the meeting, the attendance is wrong, the value that's supposed to be brought is wrong. But that's the root of it. It's really people gathering around, and then not getting value from the meeting, and actually, in their minds, being somewhere else.

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Callie Bradley: Yeah, yeah, completely, and yeah, all three of your answers really bring us back to the core of why we're here today, which is how to make meetings more productive, because they really do need to be more productive. We all have had this experience of spending all day in meetings and just feeling like nothing's accomplished.

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Callie Bradley: A lot of people are chiming in in the chat with sort of their own pet peeves. I'll just read a few. Managers too busy to pay attention. I think that sort of, in a way, touches on what you've just said here on, not introducing everyone that is on the meeting. Yeah, I agree with you there. Meetings should start with kind of clarifying who everyone is in the room and what the purpose, of them being there is, and again.

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Callie Bradley: like you said, Kieran, if there's not a clear purpose to that, then maybe we need to reevaluate that. So, thank you all, keep sharing in the chat, that's really helpful to see.

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Callie Bradley: And so I'm gonna take us into our panel discussion now, and I'm thinking we can sort of start with

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Callie Bradley: what I just mentioned, this issue of clarifying purpose and roles even before the meeting starts, just to make sure that, you know, everyone who's in the meeting has a clear reason to be there. So, Kieran, let's stick with you.

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Callie Bradley: Before we talk about fixing meetings, let's go back to the foundation. Why do we even have meetings at all, especially in the public sector?

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Ciaran Carolan: Yeah, that's a great question. So...

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Ciaran Carolan: I think, just to start with, there's probably three... at least three things you need to clarify, or a meeting organizer needs to clarify in planning for a meeting, and the first of those is exactly what you said, the purpose. Why are we having a meeting? The second of those is the audience.

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Ciaran Carolan: who needs to be there, or who should be there? And thirdly, what is the purpose of the meeting? What are we trying to achieve? And what value are we going to get from gathering these people for this particular meeting? So going to the purpose aspect of it.

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Ciaran Carolan: Obviously, that's critical, and I think it's key to focus and ask the question, what's the purpose, and do we need a meeting to achieve this purpose is also an important question. And there's many, many different types of meetings. They can be to introduce activities, they can be discussed, to brainstorm, etc. But really, I think the focus of a meeting has to be

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Ciaran Carolan: about people coming together to engage, to converse, to discuss something. If it's a matter of

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Ciaran Carolan: a situation where you're just providing information, or you're sharing some material or something like that, then it will always beg the question, is a meeting the best way to do this? Maybe an email, a dashboard, some other kind of measures, are more valuable or more useful. Particularly, I would say, in modern circumstances where we have more of an emphasis on asynchronous communications, hybrid working, things like that.

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00:11:52.910 --> 00:11:59.980

Ciaran Carolan: It even makes it more important to focus on the why, and why it's important to bring people together for a meeting.

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Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks so much, that's great, and that really leads us into our next question, which will be for you, Alana. You know, Kieran said, do we even need a meeting to achieve this purpose? Is that the right tool? And so, Alana, I'm going to ask you, before a meeting makes it into the calendar.

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Callie Bradley: What's a method organizers can use to understand and to clearly define what it's meant to achieve, firstly?

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Callie Bradley: Whether a meeting is even the right tool to achieve it, and ensure the format works for everyone.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Thanks, Callie. I actually think Kieran covered a lot of, what you've asked there. So to build on that, I mean.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: firstly, completely agree, right? Like, in order for a meeting to achieve its purpose, you need to ask those questions of basically, like, why, who, and how, right? Is it

then the right tool? And then, you know, if it's the right tool. I think I would just add that I think about it in terms of complexity and urgency as the kind of two, you know, variables to enter into. It's where those things exist. You probably, you know, want to be thinking about a meeting

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: but where they don't exist, you know, if it's not complex, if it's not urgent, you know, that's where you can maybe think, can I, you know, deliver a message that gets comprehension, even solicits feedback in a way that might not need a live meeting. You asked a question there, though, about, you know, ensuring the format works for everyone, and this is kind of leading into that piece around, you know, inclusivity. And I love that you've asked that question.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: And so, you know, how do you design a meeting? If a meeting is the right tool, how do you design a meeting that enables participation in multiple ways to suit individuals, right? Maybe someone doesn't want to speak up and would prefer sharing their thoughts and writing. Maybe someone needs some time to prepare so they know what's expected of them. So I think all of those things are really important, and I think we're going to talk a little bit about, kind of, facilitation and agenda design, and those are things to absolutely be thinking about to ensure that you have

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: an experience that allows people to both prepare in advance and then participate on the day, and then you get your outcome, right? Because if you actually don't design for that, for people to participate how it works for them, you're not going to achieve your kind of outcome. So, really critical.

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00:14:06.470 --> 00:14:20.739

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thank you, Ilana. Exactly. And sort of as we're talking about design, I'm going to go to Marius, who's designed many, many meetings over the course of his career. So, Marius, how do you design a meeting to guide participants towards an actionable outcome?

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Marius Möhler: Sure, yeah, because you just talked about two words, so that's usually kind of a... kind of a journey that I see every meeting should, should consider. So that's kind of three steps, or three elements that I think every meeting, every... even every workshop should have, which is around awareness, ownership, and commitment. So in the first step, people need to build awareness around, again, to quote Kieran, what's the purpose of this, of this meeting?

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Marius Möhler: What's actually the problem we're trying to solve, and also the awareness of who's actually here.

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Marius Möhler: Then we follow on with, ownership. So people need to clearly see, kind of, what's their role in having created that issue, or what's the role... their role in coming up with, with solutions. So they need to feel responsibility for everything that's coming up.

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Marius Möhler: And the last step, last element, of course, is commitment. People need to know what they're going to do after the meeting or the workshop. They need to clearly and preferably publicly, commit to that.

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Marius Möhler: And so that everyone knows what's gonna happen afterwards, once the meeting will close.

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Callie Bradley: Yeah, that's... that's a really good point about commitment, and you know, we saw in our survey, we had... or our opening poll, we had, three options that were just head-to-head, and one of those... one of the biggest challenges people face with meetings is poor follow-up and unclear next steps. So, yeah, commitment is clearly really important to everyone.

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Callie Bradley: So, moving a little bit into, kind of, the next phase of design and into facilitation, Alana, let's go back to you. So, what does an inclusive, outcomes-focused agenda look like in practice, and how is that different from a typical list of topics agenda?

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Yeah, absolutely.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: I think the cynical part of me would say that a list of topics agenda is not really an agenda at all, right? Because an agenda is the tool that delivers the meeting

purpose, right? It keeps everyone focused and kind of invested in that purpose, as we've just kind of been talking about. And so I think that I would say three things about designing an agenda for outcomes. One is that it is absolutely written down and shared with everyone, so everyone who is attending knows what you're speaking about and can kind of follow along and knows

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: what's expected of them. That agenda needs to have time and owners allocated to each part of that agenda, and what makes it really effective is that you also know, as a kind of meeting owner or facilitator, how you're going to facilitate those outcomes, right? So what are the actual questions you're going to ask, the tools that you're going to use? You know, maybe it's going to be a discussion, but maybe you want to use post-its or a tool like Miro or Figma

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: kind of actually get people to ideate or brainstorm. And the thing that I will say, it's actually really easier than it ever has been to design a meeting that actually does those things, right? So, you know, what I do regularly is I'll

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: go to my preferred generative AI tool, and I will say, hey, I'm, you know, running a meeting, it's about this, it is

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: this long, and these are the things I hope to cover, help me draft an agenda that achieves that outcome. And I'll kind of refine that and very quickly get to something that allows me to kind of facilitate that conversation. You also asked about inclusivity, so there were a few things that I will very happily mention, and one is that, not only is that agenda kind of written down and visible, as I mentioned before, but it's also shared in advance.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: That allows people who might need more time to process information. It also just allows everyone to come prepared, right? So what's expected of me? What context do I need to have before I'm in the room so I can actually engage meaningfully in this conversation?

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: I spoke a little bit about enabling participation in different ways, so one thing that I find is always appreciated, if you give the opportunity, for example, would you rather, kind of.

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: share your thoughts in advance. Would you rather share them in writing rather than be called on during a meeting? That allows people to contribute, even if they're not kind of able or comfortable to speak up live at the time. And the final thing that I will say is kind of being mindful of what I call it sensory needs, right? But meetings can be exhausting

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: for many of us. I'm gonna share a statistic, actually, and, you know, feel free to guess in the chat. According to research, does anyone know how long workers are able to focus before they zone out in meetings?

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Keith, I will try my best to speak, more slowly. It is my ADHD. The answer is 13 minutes. and, and so...

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: about that, you can do a few things, right? Keep meetings as short as possible. I hinted about that already. Build in short breaks. If you're running a longer meeting, give people time to just grab a glass of water, just recharge, and allow for movement, right? So some people think better when they can fidget, or stand or pace, and just

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Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: embrace a culture that allows for that. You know, if someone needs to go camera off for a second, just allow people to kind of, participate in a way that's comfortable for them.

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Callie Bradley: Thank you, Alana. Those were some really helpful tips. We got lots of guesses in the chat to your question, but...

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Callie Bradley: Yeah, what really struck me is you kind of talking about figuring out ways for people to figure out what works best for them, and how they work best in meetings, and I think that's really important for us to think about, and for meeting organizers to think about.

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Callie Bradley: So, Marius, sort of on that thread, I'm going to come to you next.

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Callie Bradley: How can behavioral approaches help us design meetings that lead to better thinking and better decision making?

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Marius Möhler: Sure. So, I guess, first, to answer that question, you need to be aware of what are the biases and the traps that people fall into in meetings, and I think one of the biggest issues that I've seen in meetings is groupthink. So, there's one voice being stated early on, and then everyone aligns around that.

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Marius Möhler: And so there's, two things that I usually, embrace. One is more, let's say, cultural, so how can you create a culture that actually promotes or fosters, like, descent, or, like,

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Marius Möhler: So there's, research on executive teams, for example, that coins the term of fight and unite. So how can you, normalize that first you need to have a healthy debate.

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Marius Möhler: And, once you have that debate, then you commit.

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Marius Möhler: And so there's, one thing that I find quite practical is to assign, people who are actually... have actually the official role of playing a devil's advocate, as cheesy as it sounds, but I think what is most effective here is whenever that person then speaks, kind of, from that role, and actually says.

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Marius Möhler: in my role as a challenger, this is what I want to notice. So it's clear, it's not about the person, but it's about the role who's speaking. That's one piece, and the second element is, I think it's often a kind of lack of participation, and so silence.

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Marius Möhler: even though I'm a big fan of silence in, like, a deliberate silence in meetings, sometimes it's also... we need to... you need to surface more... more voices, and there's actually also one, interesting fact that

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Marius Möhler: kind of group dynamic-wise, it's... if a person speaks once, the likelihood is a lot... significantly higher that this speaks... this person speaks another time. So your task as a meeting host is

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Marius Möhler: all in people, kind of let them contribute, even if it's kind of almost ridiculous. I don't know, I'm usually asking people, how do I pronounce their name? Or I ask people, can we do a quick mic check? Can I just test whether your microphone is working?

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Marius Möhler: or as you did, you kind of asked at the beginning in the chat, hey, can you please share the location, where you're sitting? And so that people... it literally pulls in people, and so that's... that's also one very practical technique that I'm employing a lot in both meetings and workshops.

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Callie Bradley: Yeah, thank you, and I love what you said about a culture that fosters dissent. I think that was the quote. Yeah, I love that, and I think that really speaks to the point that we're coming into meetings with specific sort of cultural standards that we've inherited from wherever we're from, and

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Callie Bradley: Yeah, sometimes those are not necessarily, the most conducive to, yeah, productive meetings, or decision making or sharing ideas, and so, sometimes you need, you need someone in the meeting to.

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Callie Bradley: kind of give permission to act differently, and yeah, I think that's a great point. And kind of leads us into our next question. So, Kiran, I'm going to give this one to you, because you've had so much, experience across different countries, leading and participating in meetings. So, what facilitation techniques

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00:22:40.960 --> 00:22:47.830

Callie Bradley: Have you learned that help ensure discussions stay aligned to decisions and actions, even across different cultures?

116

00:22:49.370 --> 00:23:07.839

Ciaran Carolan: Yeah, thanks, Callie. So, you know, I'm listening to what Alana says and seeing a lot of similarities. So, Alana spoke about neurodiversity and inclusivity, bearing in mind different personalities from the neurodiversity perspective. But it chimes very much with what you see internationally. It's different personalities.

117

00:23:07.840 --> 00:23:25.980

Ciaran Carolan: coming together from different cultural backgrounds and needing to knit them together into a cohesive meeting in order to deliver the objectives that have been set. And that's easy to say, not necessarily easy to do, but there are definitely techniques that can help, and I would root those in

118

00:23:26.220 --> 00:23:40.179

Ciaran Carolan: first of all, in cultural differences that you will see. So, a framework I find very, very useful. It's old, but quite useful. It's a framework written by a Dutch psychiatrist, Hofstetter, in the 1950s, that looks at

119

00:23:40.180 --> 00:23:55.599

Ciaran Carolan: different national backgrounds and how the people behave, typically, from those backgrounds. So, for example, things like power distance, how much they will respect authority will be quite different. Some countries, people from those countries will

120

00:23:55.600 --> 00:24:17.300

Ciaran Carolan: you know, say, yes, boss, whatever you say, what Marius said, the halo effect. The boss says something, and we just agree, because the boss is the person who we defer to, and others are obviously much flatter. Some cultures are more masculine, putting yourself forward, and I want to speak, and I want to say something, and then others will happily retreat into the background and

121

00:24:17.300 --> 00:24:40.730

Ciaran Carolan: be comfortable in silence. And when you're talking about facilitating and getting discussion from those, there's a few things you can do. One, I think, is being very deliberate, as Maria said, in terms of trying to engage people. So making sure that there is, for example, rotating chairmanship, so people can have an opportunity to steer the meeting from different seats, from different personalities over time.

122

00:24:40.980 --> 00:24:42.649

Ciaran Carolan: Another one is...

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00:24:42.910 --> 00:24:50.869

Ciaran Carolan: I won't say forced, but purposeful rotation of speaking, not allowing, you know, provoking the silent ones to try to come forward.

124

00:24:51.140 --> 00:25:15.400

Ciaran Carolan: Sometimes people can be loath to speak, so another excellent technique is diversifying the methodologies by which participation is possible. Ilana mentioned earlier using post-it notes. So, for example, some people are good speaking, some people are good writing, some people are good more with the touch and feel, so using different mechanisms to contribute, allowing people to maybe silently contribute.

125

00:25:15.400 --> 00:25:25.890

Ciaran Carolan: by writing something, maybe on a Miro board, using different tools, all of these are very conducive to getting different contributions in a brainstorming or engagement session.

126

00:25:25.890 --> 00:25:28.509

Ciaran Carolan: And allowing different cultures to...

127

00:25:28.840 --> 00:25:45.310

Ciaran Carolan: to mix. I can touch on a couple of other, you know, behavioral aspects. We spoke a little bit about the halo effect. Another one is confirmation bias, so Marius kind of touched on that. Having the devil's advocate in there, and again, rotating around who plays this role.

128

00:25:45.310 --> 00:25:58.539

Ciaran Carolan: You can't always be the same person who has to be the difficult one. But, you know, going in and purposely rotating around and saying, you today, I want you to raise objections to what have been said. I want you to tell me why this won't work.

129

00:25:58.540 --> 00:26:04.569

Ciaran Carolan: And in a different meeting, you know, it's a different person. Really, it's about making a culture

130

00:26:04.650 --> 00:26:16.639

Ciaran Carolan: where participation is expected, and participation is accepted. So also, as a leader of a meeting, it's important when you receive contributions that you respect them, and you entertain them. You can't.

131

00:26:16.680 --> 00:26:26.409

Ciaran Carolan: you know, throw them aside and say, oh, well, that's not something I'm going to speak about in full stop. You also need to be very promotional of the culture of

132

00:26:26.450 --> 00:26:28.620

Ciaran Carolan: Respect of all contributions.

133

00:26:30.360 --> 00:26:53.050

Callie Bradley: Yeah, I think you've made some really great points there, and I just want to highlight a message that someone sent in the chat, just about how they were told by a colleague from mainland Europe that they didn't understand Brits' tendency to start meetings with small talk, often about the weather. And for that colleague, it undermined the efficiency and purpose of the meetings, but

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00:26:53.050 --> 00:26:53.890

Callie Bradley: for...

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00:26:53.900 --> 00:27:10.920

Callie Bradley: I myself am American, but I've noticed living here that for British people, as this person in the chat shared, it's just seen as a way to break the ice and bring people into a conversation, and it's a small thing, but yeah, it can be interpreted so differently from different cultures, and

136

00:27:11.150 --> 00:27:29.070

Callie Bradley: Yeah, I really love the point you made about diversifying the methodologies by which participation is possible, because I think that what that really speaks to is the fact that, you know, we've come back to this theme again and again. Everyone has different strengths, and if we allow people to tap into those strengths.

137

00:27:29.070 --> 00:27:44.450

Callie Bradley: we're going to have more productive meetings. If we have one very strict way of how, you know, people can participate or contribute to a meeting, we're... it's going to be a less productive meeting because people have strengths that they're just not able to show in that way. So I think that's... that's really a great point.

138

00:27:44.450 --> 00:28:04.060

Callie Bradley: I'm going to stick with you as we move on to our final section of the panel that's going to be more focused on the end of the meeting, building ownership and commitment there. So, Kieran, what tends to derail follow-through after a meeting, even when everyone seemed to be aligned in the room?

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00:28:06.340 --> 00:28:12.250

Ciaran Carolan: Yeah, that's a simple question, maybe complex answer. I would say the most common

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00:28:12.360 --> 00:28:30.459

Ciaran Carolan: reason is probably, lack of clear responsibility to take things forward. So, you know, we agree as a group that this is the conclusions of the outcome, and this is what we will do next. Everybody nods their head. Well, if it's a nodding head culture, but everybody expresses agreement.

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00:28:30.520 --> 00:28:37.010

Ciaran Carolan: you know, visibly, and acknowledges that in the meeting. But then afterwards, it's not clear

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00:28:37.210 --> 00:28:50.430

Ciaran Carolan: who is going to take what aspect forward, who is responsible? Who is accountable? You know, the classic tool, and I think it's a good one, even though it's an old-fashioned tool, is the RASI matrix. Who's responsible for what? Who's accountable for what?

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00:28:50.650 --> 00:28:54.710

Ciaran Carolan: You know, who has to be kept informed, who monitors things?

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00:28:54.830 --> 00:29:17.889

Ciaran Carolan: Sometimes we look towards the leader, or we look towards the manager, you know, that person is supposed to take these things forward, but maybe the manager... the leader is not expecting that. They believe they've assigned it, they've looked to someone else, but it hasn't been a clear handover of responsibility. So I think that's the biggest one. And the other thing I would touch upon is some kind of follow-up timeline.

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00:29:17.890 --> 00:29:24.610

Ciaran Carolan: and matrix. So, I need this within a week. I want this within 2 weeks. That there is somebody responsible.

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00:29:24.610 --> 00:29:30.640

Ciaran Carolan: And there is a mechanism by which that person or those people provide the feedback

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00:29:30.820 --> 00:29:40.779

Ciaran Carolan: if they need some support, there's a monitoring framework and a timeline for the delivery of the follow-up actions. I'd say they're the two biggest things that happen to be missing at the end of a meeting.

148

00:29:41.990 --> 00:30:01.089

Callie Bradley: Yeah, yeah, and that's a common frustration I've already mentioned. It goes back to the poll that we started the session with. So, Marius, I'll throw it over to you next. What are some techniques that you use at the end of a meeting to create clear actions and hold the owners accountable, as Kieran has kind of introduced?

149

00:30:03.770 --> 00:30:14.789

Marius Möhler: I think very similar to Kieran, but actually even less sophisticated, because I actually remember, just had, like, last week, I had a conversation with, as part of a coaching, like, team coaching.

150

00:30:14.920 --> 00:30:29.759

Marius Möhler: And they... they all agreed that they actually grew quite frustrated, because they all agreed on a certain action items, and then they had different deadlines in mind. So one thought, okay, it's done until then, then the other person thinks until next week.

151

00:30:29.760 --> 00:30:37.240

Marius Möhler: And so, they were waiting for input for each other, and then it was just a lot of frustration coming up. And so, what I'm always surprised is how it's... it's...

152

00:30:37.840 --> 00:30:55.919

Marius Möhler: easier, especially at the end of a meeting, to just say, well, we... do we don't, like, roughly all agree on... on what's... what has to be done? So I think three things, I mean, yes, a clear owner, and here I always ask, do we want to delegate it to the nirana, to actually someone, like, a specific person? Then a very, very, very clear deadline, like, a specific date.

153

00:30:56.060 --> 00:31:01.049

Marius Möhler: And then, I think every action item needs, that's why it's called action items, needs to start with a verb.

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00:31:01.430 --> 00:31:19.250

Marius Möhler: So it's not kind of marketing plan, so... but it's actually the verb that needs to be followed. And I usually end this with, how... what would be... what would be your very first step right after you leave this meeting? So, once we close this meeting, what's your very first step to make progress on that action item?

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00:31:19.250 --> 00:31:25.909

Marius Möhler: And that's kind of the specificity you need in order to create, yeah, accountability and to drive progress.

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00:31:26.060 --> 00:31:31.909

Marius Möhler: Because you need to make things explicit, and move it away from this very...

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00:31:32.280 --> 00:31:39.070

Marius Möhler: Yeah, implicit area where we think we have the same understanding, but it turns out, no, we don't have the same understanding.

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00:31:40.480 --> 00:31:53.700

Callie Bradley: Yeah, yeah, that totally makes sense. I love every action item needs to start with a verb. I think that's a great actionable tip that people can take away. And Alana, I will come to you next. So...

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00:31:53.700 --> 00:32:02.210

Callie Bradley: What are some characteristics of a meeting that ends productively, particularly for different working styles?

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00:32:04.610 --> 00:32:21.760

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: there are a couple of things that I was thinking about, and a lot of what we've talked about already is kind of gonna lead to this, so hopefully helpful, but one of the first things that I think about is, has everyone who, attended.

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00:32:21.760 --> 00:32:28.039

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: have the chance to contribute, so does everyone feel heard, is the way I would kind of summarize that, right? And, you know.

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00:32:28.620 --> 00:32:49.730

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: you can do a quick check of that at the end rather than guessing. Even better is to check the answer to that question. So, does everyone feel they had the chance to contribute today? Is there anything that's been left unsaid? And just, you know, sit with that for a moment and give folks to just reflect on the answer to that question, and make sure that everyone has said what needs to be said. We spoke a lot about, kind of.

163

00:32:49.740 --> 00:33:14.139

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: outcome-oriented meetings need to have clear, actionable kind of recaps at the end, so you've got a recap, by design as part of the agenda, and you put time aside to that. It does a couple of things for me, which I think are really important. It signals the meeting achieved its purpose, right? Because you can kind of tie what was the goal of this meeting to what we're doing next, and participants just know very clearly what happens next.

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00:33:14.140 --> 00:33:39.070

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: taking the time to actually share and discuss that, put it in writing, and make sure that everyone's got that. We've spoken about that a little bit already, and I'm going to start to sound a bit like a broken record, but the final thing is that it ends on time, right? You're respectful of folks' time, so you've designed an agenda that was productive because you've met your goals, everyone's had the chance to contribute, and you finish on time or early, as we were talking about before, right? We don't end on time.

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00:33:39.070 --> 00:33:46.370

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: the sake of it, but we had a quality discussion that got its outcomes. So, kind of just really, it sounds quite, simple, but those are the things I think about.

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00:33:47.700 --> 00:34:06.759

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thank you. I love, does everyone feel heard? I think that's such an important question to ask yourself at the end of the meeting when you're in a leadership position. Well, in the spirit of having accurate agendas so that we can end on time, I'm going to move us along. Thank you guys so much for that panel.

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00:34:06.760 --> 00:34:11.779

Callie Bradley: Remember, everyone, to keep sharing any questions that you have for today's speakers.

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00:34:11.780 --> 00:34:26.920

Callie Bradley: We have a lot of questions from you already, both pre-submitted and in the Zoom Q&A, but to ensure your question gets seen and not lost in the chat, we want to ask you to submit it in the Q&A tab, which you should see at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

169

00:34:27.540 --> 00:34:36.299

Callie Bradley: And just before we dive into your questions, I want to let you know that we've also created a great follow-on resource to today's topic that we think you'll all find useful.

170

00:34:36.590 --> 00:34:45.690

Callie Bradley: This is a collection of tips from the apolitical community on how to plan your next meeting. To receive your link to these helpful community source tips.

171

00:34:45.770 --> 00:34:58.960

Callie Bradley: Go to the Life in Government community and leave a comment on the post pinned at the top of the page, and we will send you a link after the event. My colleague has also posted a link to that thread in the chat.

172

00:35:00.070 --> 00:35:09.490

Callie Bradley: Alright, let's move on to the Q&A. So, we have a lot of great questions.

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00:35:09.960 --> 00:35:13.589

Callie Bradley: Alright, I will start with one for...

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00:35:13.800 --> 00:35:20.569

Callie Bradley: Marius, so what would some advice be when joining a team and meetings already in place

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00:35:20.670 --> 00:35:35.459

Callie Bradley: Oh, sorry, when joining a team, and meetings already in place have poor structure, for example, no agenda, no clear reason as to why attendees are present, not all roles even known, yet the most senior person allows these meetings on a regular occurrence.

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00:35:35.630 --> 00:35:40.400

Callie Bradley: Would love to hear the advice that you have, for this attendee.

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00:35:41.450 --> 00:35:43.380

Marius Möhler: So I'm starting off with a very...

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00:35:43.510 --> 00:35:47.890

Marius Möhler: almost paradox, approach, which would be...

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00:35:47.910 --> 00:36:04.940

Marius Möhler: why is it functional for this meeting to take place? So, apparently, there is some functionality around not having a purpose, like, seemingly not having a purpose, and so coming with a healthy dose of curiosity and ask the question, oh, that's interesting, how come?

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00:36:05.130 --> 00:36:23.469

Marius Möhler: So I think that's just kind of one approach I would start off. And then, similar to what I said before, is kind of making the implicit explicit. And so that's saying, look, I've just... I'm just observing here that we have 10 participants, but only 2 of them are speaking. How come?

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00:36:24.000 --> 00:36:30.179

Marius Möhler: I'm just... I'm just noticing that I'm... I was invited to this meeting, and I'm not quite clear about my role. How come?

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00:36:30.540 --> 00:36:46.480

Marius Möhler: So, not coming from a judgmental point of view, but rather from a, yeah, curiosity. I think that lands a lot easier, and if you still realize that this, kind of, this soft-as-a-feather approach doesn't work, then of course you can dial it up all the way to, like, very explosive

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00:36:46.670 --> 00:36:54.400

Marius Möhler: intervention of simply not rejecting the meeting and saying that there was no purpose highlighted in the meeting invite, so I'm not gonna attend.

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00:36:54.560 --> 00:37:03.410

Marius Möhler: I know companies who actually have that internal policy, so, there's, yeah, different... different approaches here, but yeah, if I was to...

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00:37:03.720 --> 00:37:05.749

Marius Möhler: Kind of summarize it, yeah, it's kind of...

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00:37:06.110 --> 00:37:13.519

Marius Möhler: Seeing why this is helpful, in first place, and then coming from a place of curiosity.

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00:37:14.740 --> 00:37:29.489

Callie Bradley: Yeah, I love that place of curiosity. I think that's such a useful tip for those, especially, those who might not be in senior roles, when, yeah, their time is still valuable, but they want to make sure that they're, asking in the most respectful way possible, you know.

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00:37:29.610 --> 00:37:34.059

Callie Bradley: why they're on a meeting, what the purpose is, things like that. So I think that's a really great tip.

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00:37:34.100 --> 00:37:52.210

Callie Bradley: Alright, I will move on to the next one. So, office culture today seems to be that if there's no meeting, there's no guarantee people will read material or complete actions. In a world where we are all swamped with comms from all sides, and, as Alana mentioned earlier, our attention span is limited to 13 minutes at a time.

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00:37:52.210 --> 00:37:57.170

Callie Bradley: Meetings provide a rare opportunity to make a deadline tangible. So Joe asks.

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00:37:57.180 --> 00:38:03.959

Callie Bradley: How do we get around that? What kind of culture shift is needed? Marius, let's stick with you for this one.

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00:38:06.880 --> 00:38:09.980

Marius Möhler: So, I think it's... it's hard to go about

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00:38:10.050 --> 00:38:16.050

Marius Möhler: culture, because probably you're not going to change culture as an individual, so I'd rather would ask myself.

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00:38:16.050 --> 00:38:34.590

Marius Möhler: how can I... again, how can I design meetings so it... or design processes so it makes absolutely sense for people to read through materials that I would assume, for example, I don't know, I send, I send out a document and say, send me your... send me your top question you have on that document before that meeting.

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00:38:34.600 --> 00:38:40.470

Marius Möhler: I would structure the design... the agenda or the meeting around

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00:38:40.570 --> 00:38:51.300

Marius Möhler: that... that people actually need to have delivered that. And even I've facilitate leadership team... leadership meetings where there was a kind of a clear...

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00:38:51.480 --> 00:39:03.159

Marius Möhler: expectation that people, pre-submit presentations, they record it, and then the actual meeting is only about discussion. And so,

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00:39:03.400 --> 00:39:15.930

Marius Möhler: these people can simply not participate if they haven't done the pre-work, and that, yes, maybe the first two meetings, people will end up not having prepared, but I think later after the third meeting, they realize, oh.

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00:39:16.430 --> 00:39:20.580

Marius Möhler: I think that's a clear expectation here, and so... Rather, kind of.

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00:39:20.790 --> 00:39:29.380

Marius Möhler: yeah, don't go for culture. I think it's hard to change. Rather go for, kind of, things you can, yeah, directly, directly influence.

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00:39:30.180 --> 00:39:49.659

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks for that, and I think you've given us a lot of really great tips for things you can directly influence today. We got a great question in the chat that I'm going to direct at Kieran. What current trends should I be aware of in meeting etiquette when the audience is from the public sector versus the private sector? Love to hear your thoughts on that.

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00:39:50.590 --> 00:40:08.649

Ciaran Carolan: Yeah, so... so that's a great question. I can speak from the public sector point of view more than the private sector, to be honest with you. My experience in the private sector is decades ago, and quite small, so I'd invite my other speakers to come in if there's anything I'm missing, particularly on the private sector.

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00:40:08.650 --> 00:40:12.690

Ciaran Carolan: But, when it comes to public sector,

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00:40:12.980 --> 00:40:29.670

Ciaran Carolan: I would say you're dealing with a more diverse group of people, typically, than in a private sector area. Private sector tend to hire, for example, for culture, so a private sector entity will come in and say, I want somebody who is a fit.

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00:40:29.670 --> 00:40:42.489

Ciaran Carolan: to the way I work and what I do, so there's more of a homogenous audience. In the public sector, it's the case, and I think it's critically the case, that there's diverse people working in public sector who represent

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00:40:42.490 --> 00:40:50.400

Ciaran Carolan: the, the people, the citizens that they are working for, and the diversity of those citizens. So it makes sense that we hire for diversity.

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00:40:50.400 --> 00:41:14.780

Ciaran Carolan: But that means when you're having meetings, you have to cater for this diversity, and cater for the different types of behaviors, the different types of cultures, the different ways of working that people have. And that goes back very much to what we spoke about before, the fact that you need to engineer your meetings to receive, for example, from people who may be less willing or more

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00:41:14.780 --> 00:41:35.629

Ciaran Carolan: more willing to speak up, who may be more into writing and reading. Another aspect is language. In many countries, and particularly in international environments, we might have diverse languages. We had a comment, you know, can you slow down? It's something that's said to me quite frequently as well, you know, Kieran, you're speaking too quickly, you're a native speaker, everybody around the table

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00:41:35.630 --> 00:41:38.589

Ciaran Carolan: is not understanding you. Can you slow down?

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00:41:38.590 --> 00:41:45.409

Ciaran Carolan: try to avoid use of jargon, use of acronyms. It's something a lot of us do in technical areas.

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00:41:45.410 --> 00:41:54.839

Ciaran Carolan: And providing a culture around it to allow people to ask questions if they don't understand, and to accept those questions as legitimate.

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00:41:54.840 --> 00:42:06.669

Ciaran Carolan: A thing I find common, and something that I like to do, if somebody asks a question like this as a chair, I'll turn around and say, that's an excellent question, because I'm pretty sure that you weren't the only people

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00:42:06.680 --> 00:42:13.889

Ciaran Carolan: the only person having that question, the only person who didn't understand what I said. Provide that comfort that we're soliciting

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00:42:14.220 --> 00:42:33.890

Ciaran Carolan: you know, queries, questions, and the person who asked the question is actually doing a good job. The person is benefiting the overall conduct of the meeting and the conclusions of the meeting to ask those questions. These are the types of things that I think are more necessary in public sector than in private sector.

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00:42:33.910 --> 00:42:35.990

Ciaran Carolan: Don't know if that fully answers your question.

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00:42:37.240 --> 00:42:58.040

Callie Bradley: Yeah, I thought you made some really great points. I love that one about, you know, if you have a question, probably someone else in the room does too, and I think that is so true. I think we can really second-guess ourselves, but more often than not, I think that is true. And yeah, going back to this idea of catering for diversity and for different ways of working, I'm going to come to Alana.

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00:42:58.580 --> 00:43:00.120

Callie Bradley: any other business.

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00:43:00.120 --> 00:43:18.709

Callie Bradley: which is often at the end of a meeting agenda, can be a source of anxiety for some, especially, some people who, yeah, don't love to be put on the spot at the end of a meeting. So, what's the most effective way to handle any other business in an agenda, and how can it be prevented from derailing the meeting?

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00:43:18.710 --> 00:43:35.359

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Yeah, great. it, so I've got a couple of, kind of, recommendations, on this, and where I've seen it work really well is actually when you surface those at the beginning of the meeting, right? As, here's what the agenda is going to include today, we've set aside time for any other business.

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00:43:35.360 --> 00:44:00.340

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: what do we need to talk about, right? And you maybe collect the list of things that you might want to discuss together at that time, and then agree, or even vote. So there's something called a kind of lean coffee meeting, where you kind of put lots of ideas for what you might discuss in a meeting, and kind of vote on which ones you want to discuss, and

the things that are most upvoted are what you discuss, right? So have a, you know, a place to kind of know or agree, this is what

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00:44:00.340 --> 00:44:25.280

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: we will discuss today. This is maybe what we won't get to today. And then, I think the key is time boxing them, right? So, you know, we'll put 5 minutes aside for each item. You could use a tactic where you get to the end of those five minutes and you say, okay, we haven't completed this discussion, do we want to extend that? It might be at the cost of this part, or, you know, extending the meeting. Is everyone in agreement with that? Okay, either we call it there, or we move on

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00:44:25.280 --> 00:44:36.479

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: to the next thing, and that kind of allows everyone to, A, have a clear idea of what we're discussing for how long, and kind of feel in control of that. And you can kind of just keep... keep ownership of the agenda in that way, and I've seen that work really well.

223

00:44:37.820 --> 00:45:01.639

Callie Bradley: Yeah, that's a great point, and speaking to that pain point that we saw in the early poll of meetings running over time or going off topic, I think I've seen in my own professional life that any other business being a huge source of meetings going over time, because there's just no structure for it, and yeah, I love your point about kind of specificity, both in the content of any other business, but also in the time.

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00:45:01.640 --> 00:45:03.200

Callie Bradley: and time busking, I think that's...

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00:45:03.200 --> 00:45:10.149

Callie Bradley: super, super useful. I'm going to stick with you. We've had a question...

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00:45:10.180 --> 00:45:21.219

Callie Bradley: For someone needing a different approach slash recognition of neurodiversity in meetings, how can we advocate for these things? Do you have any advice, for this attendee?

227

00:45:21.720 --> 00:45:46.669

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Yeah, absolutely. And what I would also say is that there's lots of conversations like this happening in the neurodiversity community, so feel free to kind of check it out there, start a discussion if you'd like. You can also post anonymously in that community, so

you can do so and kind of get feedback without having to disclose who you are. And I think there's a couple of tools that I would point to. The first thing that I love recommending is

228

00:45:46.670 --> 00:46:10.050

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: a user manual or user guide, and this is just generally for how you work, but if you have a culture of writing up, you know, here's how I work, or here's what I need, or here's how I work best, and you are able to surface those to your manager or your colleagues, it allows you to just kind of say, hey, this is how you're going to get the best out of me in this situation.

229

00:46:10.050 --> 00:46:35.039

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: The other thing, depending on where this person is from, there are things like accommodations and reasonable adjustments, easy for me to say, that allow you to access the things you need in order to kind of do your work and participate within a kind of a legal context. So that allows you to ask for those things. If you feel comfortable, you can, of course, message the facilitator, maybe in advance, and say.

230

00:46:35.040 --> 00:46:41.789

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: could we do it this way, or can you maybe kind of think about this? If you're not comfortable, you know, then, you know, feel free to

231

00:46:41.880 --> 00:46:52.160

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: participate as you feel most comfortable during the meeting, and then kind of maybe follow up and say, hey, there were some things I wasn't able to share, you know, you know, do what feels comfortable.

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00:46:52.470 --> 00:46:54.080

Ilana Munckton, Apolitical: Yeah.

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00:46:54.080 --> 00:47:19.080

Callie Bradley: Yeah, I love the user manual suggestion. I think those can be really useful. I'm not sure if everyone is familiar with those, but yeah, I think they can be great in the workplace. And I also love your point about messaging facilitators either before a meeting or maybe after, because, yeah, like, the point that one of you made earlier in the panel about just making sure everyone's heard, I think this is just kind of another way. Maybe it's not speaking up in the meeting, but it's just another

234

00:47:19.080 --> 00:47:42.639

Callie Bradley: way to make sure that your voice is heard. So, I think that's great. Kieran, I'm going to come back to you. So, we received a couple questions on managing meetings and agendas when you're not actually the meeting organizer, and I think this is really important to touch upon because, you know, we do have some really senior-level folks in the room, but we also have quite a few mid-level folks and some junior folks as well.

235

00:47:42.640 --> 00:47:50.589

Callie Bradley: If you are not the meeting organizer, how can you convey to somebody that they should structure their meetings better, have a better agenda, respect speaking time, etc?

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00:47:52.420 --> 00:48:00.470

Ciaran Carolan: Okay, so I think first things first, it's important to say that the person who is coordinating the meeting takes responsibility for

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00:48:00.600 --> 00:48:17.010

Ciaran Carolan: running and setting the agenda. So that's something you cannot abdicate. You can assign to somebody else and say, please prepare a meeting agenda, please reach out, talk to the group, which I think is an excellent idea. It touches upon what's spoken about, you know, and making sure that all things that are on one's mind.

238

00:48:17.070 --> 00:48:33.700

Ciaran Carolan: are accommodated in the agenda setting, and this avoids something like AOB extending, you know, ad infinitum, because you shouldn't be too surprised as a meeting coordinator at that point if everybody's putting their hand up wanting to say something. That means you haven't canvassed for the

239

00:48:33.700 --> 00:48:45.040

Ciaran Carolan: necessary points and opinions the right way. So you can assign responsibility to other members of the team to, you know, find out what's needed and set an agenda, but ultimately, if you are

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00:48:45.150 --> 00:49:04.799

Ciaran Carolan: chairing the meeting, if you're coordinating the meeting, you are accountable, I would say, to make sure that agenda is properly structured, it's outcome-oriented, and it's something that can be accommodated in the time that is set. That's another thing, somebody sets a one-hour meeting, and then you see the agenda extends over two pages.

241

00:49:04.800 --> 00:49:23.189

Ciaran Carolan: you should be addressing these things long before the meeting ever takes place. So, that's, I think, really, really important. Now, if I look at the question from the other perspective, as you put it, Callie, I think it's a little bit like what you asked of Marius earlier on. If you're not coordinating a meeting, if you're not chairing the meeting.

242

00:49:23.260 --> 00:49:35.519

Ciaran Carolan: How can you push it towards, you know, the success that you want to achieve as a team member? Maybe you're not the chair. A leader is a chair, and you're just supporting.

243

00:49:35.820 --> 00:49:53.950

Ciaran Carolan: I think you can prompt along the way to, if, for example, things are going wrong, try to interject into conversation and say, listen, you know, with respect, we've been dealing with this matter for, like, 15 minutes, we have 15 minutes left in the meeting, and we have 3 further agenda items to get through.

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00:49:53.970 --> 00:49:59.559

Ciaran Carolan: Would it be helpful, and it's always important to offer help, would it be helpful if

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00:49:59.660 --> 00:50:06.350

Ciaran Carolan: you know, I take this back, coordinate with the colleagues, and present to you a follow-up item subsequent to the meeting.

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00:50:06.400 --> 00:50:21.849

Ciaran Carolan: you know, try to provide solutions to move the meeting along when you're in the meeting. I think that's... that's something that can be appreciated and very, very useful. And otherwise, I would speak to what Maria said earlier on. Also, in follow-up to the meeting.

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00:50:22.090 --> 00:50:41.119

Ciaran Carolan: you know, have some conversations, have this part of culture to speak to the facilitators, to speak to the chair and say afterwards, you know, that ran over a little bit long, or we didn't manage to deal with certain aspects or achieve outcomes that we sought. I have some suggestions. Maybe, the next time

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00:50:41.120 --> 00:50:45.349

Ciaran Carolan: We could share some of the burden. We could,

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00:50:46.350 --> 00:50:59.020

Ciaran Carolan: take into account some preparatory work, for example, to brainstorm, to do some, some collection of ideas or collection of opinions in advance of the meeting. And again, it's always good to volunteer.

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00:50:59.020 --> 00:51:14.939

Ciaran Carolan: and say, I'm willing to help with this, would that be useful for you? Would you like to try it? So it's respectful to the boss, it's respectful to the facilitator, it's helping them, but all with a view to trying to achieve the outcomes that everybody in the team is trying to achieve through this meeting.

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00:51:16.140 --> 00:51:18.619

Callie Bradley: Yeah, I think... It's a really... oh, yes, come.

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00:51:18.620 --> 00:51:28.759

Marius Möhler: Do you mind if I interrupt you? Sorry about this. I just... I guess it just struck a chord with me, and I think that's something that we haven't really touched upon in this panel so far, which is, like, not everything needs to happen in a meeting.

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00:51:29.110 --> 00:51:39.439

Marius Möhler: There's, there's so much to do before a meeting or after a meeting, so being crystal clear on what exactly needs to happen synchronously.

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00:51:39.440 --> 00:51:49.850

Marius Möhler: And what are things we can easily outsource to... beforehand, afterwards, or even say, look, maybe this is something to be... to be seen as a process, and we need 3 meetings.

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00:51:49.850 --> 00:52:03.260

Marius Möhler: And not everything needs to happen now. So I think that's... that's... I think, yeah, one of the, like, most, most important, to say, suggestions I usually provide if I'm looking at meeting design and even workshop design, like.

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00:52:03.800 --> 00:52:11.470

Marius Möhler: like, does it need to happen now? Can we... can we do it, I don't know, in smaller groups, in a different place, the other time? I think that's... that's quite...

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00:52:11.580 --> 00:52:14.270

Marius Möhler: Yeah, it's quite important for me, at least.

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00:52:14.950 --> 00:52:38.009

Callie Bradley: Yeah, that's a really good point, Marius, and I'm actually going to stick with you because we had a question about best practices for facilitating virtual meetings where there are diverse levels of comfort using technology, and so I'm wondering if maybe this is a situation where you would sort of decide that not everything necessarily needs to happen in a virtual meeting. Is that the approach you would take, or how would... yeah, how would you deal with such a diverse

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00:52:38.150 --> 00:52:40.299

Callie Bradley: Comfort level of technology.

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00:52:40.750 --> 00:52:51.080

Marius Möhler: Yeah, I already saw that and responded already in written, but let me just reiterate this on this verbally. So I think, on using tools, there are actually two things that I'm... I've... I've done

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00:52:51.260 --> 00:53:04.299

Marius Möhler: kind of a lot of virtual workshops, especially during corona. And so one thing that I noticed in my kind of way of working with virtual workshops, I hardly use virtual, like, virtual whiteboards.

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00:53:04.420 --> 00:53:12.079

Marius Möhler: So I think many things can easily be done by sharing a Word document that everyone is working on in a SharePoint.

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00:53:12.090 --> 00:53:30.159

Marius Möhler: Using the chat function, so I use a lot of, let's say, lo-fi, tools, unless I really need to work visually, and that's where I use online whiteboards. And if I use online whiteboards, I always give people the chance to explore it beforehand, so I always send out a simple task.

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00:53:30.320 --> 00:53:39.529

Marius Möhler: Where they just need to create a sticky note, they need to move it around, maybe change the color, maybe cluster. Could be as simple as, I don't know.

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00:53:40.250 --> 00:53:59.819

Marius Möhler: pull the sticky note to the corresponding item that actually represents the current weather at your location right now. So, really simple, so people who have never used that tool, they can experiment with this safely beforehand. And those who don't need that help, of course, they can just dive into the meeting right away.

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00:53:59.820 --> 00:54:03.919

Marius Möhler: But I think that also increases some form of accessibility.

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00:54:05.540 --> 00:54:14.269

Callie Bradley: Yeah, thanks, Marius. I think that's a great point about giving people a way to experiment in a low-stakes way beforehand, so they don't feel pressure, and they can just feel more comfortable

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00:54:14.270 --> 00:54:29.149

Callie Bradley: being in the virtual room and contributing. Well, thank you guys. We've had some incredible wisdom from each of our speakers, and I'd like to ask you all to join me in giving Kieran, Alana, and Marius a virtual round of applause.

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00:54:29.360 --> 00:54:36.190

Callie Bradley: And most importantly, thanks to you, the attendees, for investing in your learning and being so engaged in this topic.

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00:54:36.550 --> 00:54:39.930

Callie Bradley: The team is going to pull up a couple of quick polls.

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00:54:40.170 --> 00:54:46.050

Callie Bradley: So, firstly, we want to know what you would like to see next.

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00:54:46.280 --> 00:54:50.090

Callie Bradley: So, what would you like to learn about at an apolitical event next?

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00:54:50.170 --> 00:55:03.490

Callie Bradley: Some options are building lightweight dashboards for team visibility, reaching faster decisions with colleagues, using data to forecast workload and capacity, turning discussions into follow-through, or if it's something else.

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00:55:03.540 --> 00:55:10.579

Callie Bradley: Please let us know in the chat. We would love to hear what would be most useful to you all.

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00:55:12.450 --> 00:55:15.499

Callie Bradley: Give a couple more...

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00:55:15.740 --> 00:55:35.619

Callie Bradley: seconds for this, looks like all of these options, are pretty helpful, but most of all, reaching faster decisions with colleagues, and yeah, I think we can all attest that that is something that can be a challenge, and that it would be useful to learn some kind of practical tactics to

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00:55:35.620 --> 00:55:38.250

Callie Bradley: Speed up those decisions.

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00:55:39.110 --> 00:55:41.120

Callie Bradley: Great.

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00:55:42.520 --> 00:56:02.240

Callie Bradley: So, we also would love to hear, last but not least, about how you felt about our session today, which will help us continue improving our content. We really appreciate your responses to this, and these will not be shared, so yes, please just, answer honestly, and we will keep these poll results private.

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00:56:03.730 --> 00:56:22.340

Callie Bradley: So, while you're responding to that poll, and before you go, I want to share a few more events that you can register to join us at again soon. And if you're not available to join live, just remember that you can always register for the event in order to get sent the recording, so you can catch up whenever it suits you.

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00:56:22.820 --> 00:56:34.980

Callie Bradley: So, we have STAR storytelling for UK Civil Service Applications next Thursday, where you will learn how to use the STAR technique to set yourself apart when applying for UK civil service roles.

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00:56:35.470 --> 00:56:37.140

Callie Bradley: Then, in 2 weeks.

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00:56:37.140 --> 00:56:56.420

Callie Bradley: We have how to lead neuro-Inclusive Teams in Public Service with experienced public service leaders who will help you improve your team's inclusivity in working relationships. And I think a lot of the points that we made at the panel today will be sort of expanded upon in that session, so we'd really love to see you there.

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00:56:56.420 --> 00:57:06.769

Callie Bradley: And then, finally, the day after, we have Let's Talk About AI Ethics and Safety, where you'll hear from experts on how to make informed choices when using AI in your government work.

285

00:57:07.240 --> 00:57:13.640

Callie Bradley: And speaking of AI, we would love your help shaping Apolitical's AI learning offer for 2026,

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00:57:13.640 --> 00:57:31.579

Callie Bradley: So, we'd appreciate it if you could take our short, anonymous survey to tell us how you're using AI at work, and what's holding you back from using it more. My colleague is going to post the link to that survey in the chat now, so we would love to hear some responses from you on that as well.

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00:57:32.730 --> 00:57:41.239

Callie Bradley: Alright, in the spirit of ending on time, or a little bit early, that is all we have time for today.

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00:57:41.330 --> 00:57:53.450

Callie Bradley: We hope you found it helpful, and we want to say a huge thank you again to our speakers, to everyone who has made today happen, and to you, the attendees, for taking time out of your busy days.

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00:57:53.730 --> 00:58:09.499

Callie Bradley: Keep an eye out for the email coming your way with today's recording and resources. Don't forget to find my post in the Life and Government community, and we hope to see you at another apolitical event very soon. Have a great day, goodbye.

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