

making meetings matter

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At GGi, one of the most common questions we are asked is:

How can we release staff time from meetings in our organisation while making governance more effective?

To help organisations address this challenge, we have pioneered a programme of work we call Making Meetings Matter, based on a lean methodology grounded in our deep understanding of good governance.

Our methodology is tried and tested and has had a big impact at NHS trusts, returning significant amounts of clinical and executive time while simultaneously improving assurance grip.

Save over 1,000 hours of executive time.
Develop clearer more effective governance.
Improve your standing with the regulator.

Our lean methodology helps organisations make their governance more efficient and effective, freeing up hundreds of hours of unnecessary meeting time.

Research published in the Harvard Business Review suggests that:

70%

of meetings keep employees from doing productive work

92%

of employees consider meetings costly and unproductive

20%

reduced meetings to have an impact on employee engagement¹

1. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/dear-manager-youre-holding-too-many-meetings>

For more information, please get in touch via contact@good-governance.org.uk

Typically delivered in three phases, we take lean system management thinking and apply it to good governance:

1. Discovery. First, we carry out an in-depth audit of the regular assurance meetings at your trust. We have never found fewer than 80 such meetings and once we found more than 300 - the results always come as a surprise to our clients.

From the audit, we:

- Evaluate the opportunity cost of these meetings in terms of staff time. Usually, this amounts to several million pounds' worth of time per year.
- Develop purpose slides so the rationale and reporting for all groups is understood. This also often illustrates where there is duplication of effort.

2. Redesign. There is no standard template to drag and drop into any organisation, so we use the lean systems approach and work with you to redesign the assurance structure.

This part of the process needs buy-in and can't be 'done to' an organisation - it is about learning and development.

Lean systems approaches start with what the 'customer' wants and needs - in this case what the board and the regulator want and need from their assurance system. It is not unusual for the board not to have seriously considered this.

A well-designed assurance structure has as few tiers as possible, minimal handover points, forethought about the value of each assurance level, and clear accountability. We ensure we are designing a system of high integrity and quality, as well as removing cost, and that there is a proper governance line of sight. For the newly agreed structure we develop a purpose slide and plain English ToRs for each group. We would expect to remove at least 20% of meeting time. We also cost the savings - time that can be returned to managing and clinical work.

3. Implementation. You will appreciate that this is a significant piece of organisational development. It is your culture and collective efforts that will ensure success and release time. This means changing hearts and minds, and confronting the tyranny of habit. Using the Lawson and Price 'Influence Model' and PDSA, we support your trust over three monthly cycles of business to improve your processes. This is accompanied by training, awareness raising (so that all staff understand and use the new system) and measurement to ensure that the twin virtues of better but fewer meetings is achieved.

Ultimately, this results in better, more reliable assurance that consumes less managerial and clinical time.

impact

At one trust we worked with we managed to reduce the total number of management groups by 137, achieving the following efficiencies:

A more understandable structure, better aligned to executive responsibilities

1384 hours of executive time released

In excess of 500 fewer meetings to be attended per year by execs

336 hours of non-executive time released

168 fewer meetings for non-executive directors to attend