

**Doodle**



**STATE OF MEETINGS**  
**Q2 2020**

**TREND REPORT**  
**AUGUST 2020**

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# INTRODUCTION

Meetings are a staple of business life. The data supports this: [Time spent in meetings has increased by 10 percent](#) every year since 2000. They are an essential forum to share information, collaborate with teams on projects, problem-solve key challenges, support and meet clients' needs, make critical decisions and get inspiration from others.

As vital as meetings are to business success, they can also be frustrating and problematic. One of the biggest gripes we hear from employees is that [meetings are unproductive](#) and a waste of time. There are multiple underlying causes of this frustration. On one hand, the process of [scheduling meetings](#) is heavily dependent on email communications, labor-intensive and time-consuming. Second, meeting overload has become commonplace, with employees' calendars

being packed full of meetings that they don't necessarily need to attend. On top of that, meetings often are booked on days/times that interrupt employees' peak productivity 'flow.'

The repercussions of unproductive meetings can be serious and affect both individuals and their employers. According to [a survey of 1,945 workers by Korn Ferry](#), 51 percent of professionals said spending too much time in meetings and on calls distracts them from making an impact at work to some extent. Another 16 percent said this is true to a great extent. To combat this, businesses must take advantage of technology and be highly organized across the entire meeting lifecycle - from deciding who to invite and scheduling the meeting to preparing ahead of the meeting, conducting the meeting itself and following up with action plans.

## ABOUT THE DATA POWERING THE REPORT

The *State of Meetings* report is an in-depth quarterly review of the meetings that are scheduled worldwide. The information contained in this report is based on the analysis of meetings booked worldwide by more than 30 million users on [Doodle](#) during the second quarter of 2020. The report also analyzes data from other trusted sources to provide further context and validation of the data from our scheduling platform.

Organizations of all types can leverage this information to ensure more effective, productive meetings. The report's findings are based on

aggregate, anonymized data and includes the following information:

- The types of meetings booked worldwide
- The quantities of and variations in types of meetings booked
- Meeting notice etiquette
- Meeting duration and size - and the impact on the effectiveness of meetings
- Meeting styles and preferences by country (US, UK, Germany, Switzerland, France)

## KEY FINDINGS & TRENDS

- In Q2 2020, client-facing meetings (23 percent) took up prime calendar space, followed by internal meetings (16 percent) and education meetings (16 percent). This was likely shaped by the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and educational institutions.
- Virtual board/shareholder meetings and conferences became increasingly commonplace, as 41 percent of the group meetings were conducted virtually. Plus, the number of virtual group meetings rose by 109 percent quarter-over-quarter.
- Virtual one-to-one meetings jumped 136 percent in Q2 2020, driven in large part by an increased demand for frequent check-ins during COVID-19.
- The most common notice period given ahead of meetings is five or more days (66 percent), followed by 10+ days (42 percent) and 15+ days (28 percent). But urgency occasionally calls for meetings to be scheduled with less than 24 hours' warning.
- Shorter meetings (15 minutes and 30 minutes) edged out the standard default of one-hour meetings. Additionally, smaller group meetings (four to five participants) reigned supreme.
- There is no time in the workday when Americans are less likely to have meetings, except for 12:00 pm noon when there is a slight dip to 9 percent. But then the percentage of meetings jumps up to 13 percent just one hour later, at 1:00 pm. This shows a clear pattern: Americans are always meeting and always working. Meanwhile, Thursday dominates as the most popular meeting day.
- Although the British are early risers, they don't schedule meetings during that time. Instead, afternoon meetings in the middle of the week are their sweet spot.
- In France, lunch breaks are considered to be sacred and off limits for meetings. As a result, the post-lunch 2:00 pm slot is the most popular meeting time. While Thursday is the ideal meeting day, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are acceptable too.
- More than half (57 percent) of German meetings occur between 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm, leaving the mornings to complete more focused, 'deep' work. Surprisingly, weekend meetings are more common in Germany than in the US and other European countries.
- In Switzerland, evening meetings are more common than some might think, with 18 percent of the meetings taking place between 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm. While not as prevalent as their German counterparts, weekend meetings aren't all that uncommon among the Swiss.

# EVERY MEETING HAS A PURPOSE

## Prime Calendar Space Is Reserved for Client Meetings, Internal Meetings and Education Meetings

There are various types of meetings that occur in a personal setting and in the workplace. For the purpose of this report, we have specified meeting types under the following categories: [client-facing](#), internal, [education](#), private lessons, [recruitment](#), service appointments, [board meetings](#), organization meetings, training, personal and other.

**Client-Facing Meetings:** [Sales/prospecting calls](#), [legal meetings](#) (with billable hours), [digital agency meetings](#), [new business pitches](#), client kickoff meetings, client status updates

**Internal Meetings:** [One-to-one check-ins](#), [team meetings](#), project meetings, problem-solving meetings, all-hands/town halls

**Education:** School/university classes, online courses/workshops, student-teacher meetings, faculty meetings, professor office hours

**Private Lessons:** Piano, yoga, singing, language, etc.

**Recruitment:** Hiring manager-recruiter intake, candidate screening calls, HR interviews with candidates, hiring manager interviews with candidates, panel interview sessions, new hire onboarding, employee performance reviews, exit interviews

**Service Appointment:** Medical/dental, salon, home maintenance, etc.

**Organization:** Gatherings/events for members of industry associations/groups

**Board Meetings:** Gathering of C-suite/board of directors to devise corporate strategy, budget planning/forecasting, business growth/expansion, crisis management

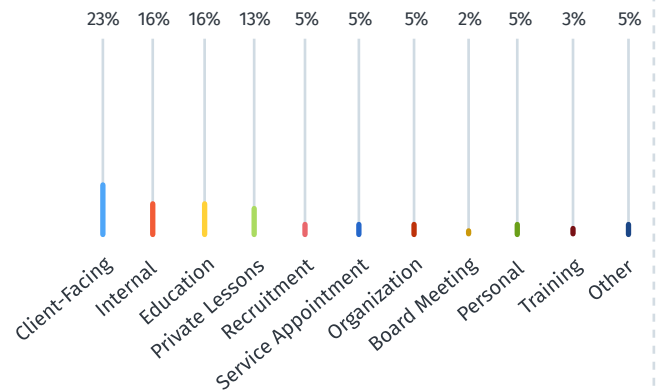
**Personal:** Social activities such as barbecues, movie nights, happy hours, etc.

**Training:** Sign up sheets for courses to learn new skills

**Other:** Delivery, clerical, gardening, massage, church, book club, scheduling shift, etc.

Based on our [scheduling platform](#) data, client-facing meetings occupied the most space in people's calendars in Q2 2020, accounting for 23 percent of the total meetings booked during that period. This type of meeting was more prevalent than internal meetings (16 percent), educational meetings (16 percent), recruitment/job interviews (5 percent) and board meetings (2 percent).

Common Meeting Types, Q2 2020



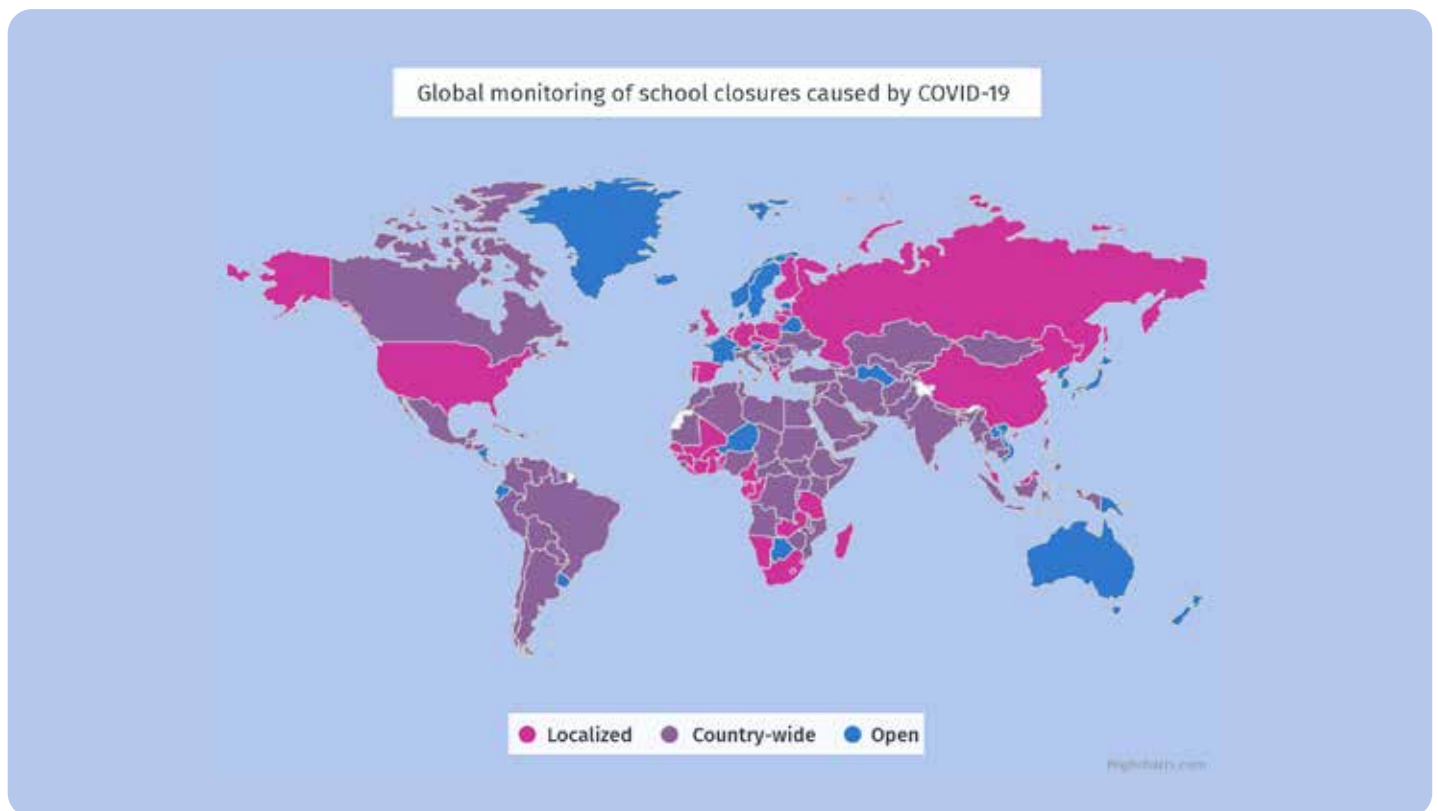
Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

To understand why client-facing meetings were more prevalent than other types of meetings, let's look at what occurred in Q2 2020. Just a month earlier (March), businesses around the world enforced [mandatory work-from-home policies](#) as a way of curbing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses, large and small, were hit hard by COVID-19, with negative impacts to their operations and revenue. That put increasing pressure on businesses to [keep clients engaged, happy and loyal](#). So it's not surprising that client-facing meetings were given top priority in employees' calendars during this period. When client meetings go well, they can move the relationship forward, strengthen trust and lead to long-term business growth.

Following close behind were internal meetings, which accounted for 16 percent of the total meetings booked in Q2 2020. The value of internal meetings, besides sharing information, is to give employees the opportunity to have their voices heard, to actively participate in the growth of the business and to influence the work environment and culture. With millions of workers having to adjust to remote working (indefinitely), many workplace experts advised that HR teams, managers and senior executives step up their employee engagement efforts by holding more frequent meetings, such as weekly all-hands and daily one-to-one check-ins, to [help their remote workers cope and alleviate stress](#).

Additionally, education meetings accounted for 16 percent of the meetings booked in Q2 2020. This is the same rate as the internal meetings that took

place during this period. It's important to note that COVID-19 had a profound impact on [educational institutions](#) around the world. According to [data from UNESCO](#), COVID-19 has affected more than one billion learners and resulted in 109 country-wide closures around the world. Educational institutions that didn't want to close decided to shift to a virtual educational model, which involved teaching students online, holding office hours with professors remotely, conducting parent-teacher conferences with the help of Zoom as well as organizing faculty meetings online to manage the day-to-day operations and make important decisions. Given the UNESCO figures, we aren't surprised to see that education meetings were among the top three types of meetings that took place in Q2 2020.

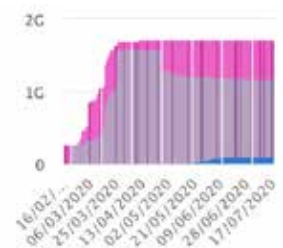


Source: UNESCO, COVID-19 Education Response

**1,066,817,855**  
affected learners

**60.9%**  
of total enrolled  
learners

**107**  
country-wide closures



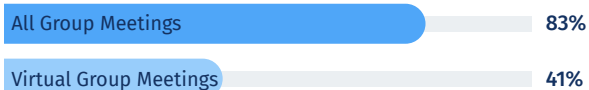


# THE BEGINNING OF A VIRTUAL-ONLY MEETING ERA

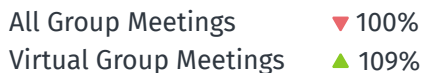
## The Rise of Virtual Shareholder Meetings and Conferences

As our platform data reveals, virtual group meetings accounted for 41 percent of the meetings in Q2 2020. Plus, the number of virtual-only group meetings rose by 109 percent in Q2 2020, compared to the previous quarter. That's relatively high and reflects the current situation, which has forced organizations to rethink how they approach certain types of meetings that involve large audiences and require extensive planning, such as annual shareholder meetings and all-hands meetings. This is supported by a recent [Intelligize report](#), which found that, as of May 1, 2020, 65 percent of S&P 500 companies had either held or announced plans to hold virtual annual shareholder meetings this year.

### Total Group Meetings Booked, Q2 2020



### QoQ Change, Q2 2020 vs. Q1 2020



Take, for example, the [Daimler Annual Shareholders' Meeting](#). The event, which attracts thousands of shareholders, shareholder representatives, investors, analysts and media, has been held at Messe Berlin for several years. But due to the spread of COVID-19, the organizers of this year's shareholders' meeting had to readjust and rethink how the event would go forward, if at all. Because Daimler is a stock corporation and required by law to hold a shareholders' meeting at least once a year, cancelling the 2020 Daimler Annual Shareholders' Meeting simply wasn't an option. So, the organizers quickly pivoted to host the shareholders' meeting virtually, bringing in over 12,000 attendees who joined from their laptops, tablets and smartphones.

For [students and researchers](#), attending academic conferences can serve multiple purposes. For one, they provide access to various research activities in a particular subject with the latest developments and findings. Plus, researchers can present a paper and get their research published in accredited journals. Finally, these events also serve as a networking opportunity for future collaborations.

Many conferences have had to change up their normal plans and conduct their events virtually. For the most part, attendees of these conferences have welcomed this change with open arms, with 82 percent of the [researchers surveyed by Nature.com](#) saying they would be willing to attend an online conference in the future. This could certainly have contributed to the spike in virtual group meetings in Q2 2020.

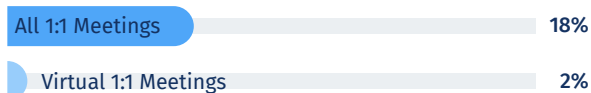
## Frequent Check-Ins Lead to Spike in Virtual One-to-One Meetings

[Research from Harvard Business Review](#) contends that remote workers are more likely to feel alienated or disconnected compared to onsite employees. We also encountered this when we surveyed remote workers for our ["Growing Client Loyalty Remotely" study](#): 68 percent of the employees said a full week of virtual-only meetings left them feeling exhausted and stressed.

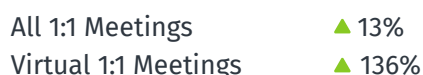
Countering these negative feelings is certainly not easy. To do so, it's vital that organizations (across HR, operations, team leaders and the C-suite) make it a top priority to conduct frequent check-ins with remote workers to ensure their challenges, fears and questions are being addressed. This can make the difference between an engaged, resilient remote worker and a [disengaged, stressed remote worker](#).

When you consider the importance and value of frequent one-to-one meetings on employees who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we can understand why virtual [one-to-one meetings](#) increased by 136 percent in Q2 2020, compared to the previous quarter.

### Total 1:1 Meetings Booked, Q2 2020

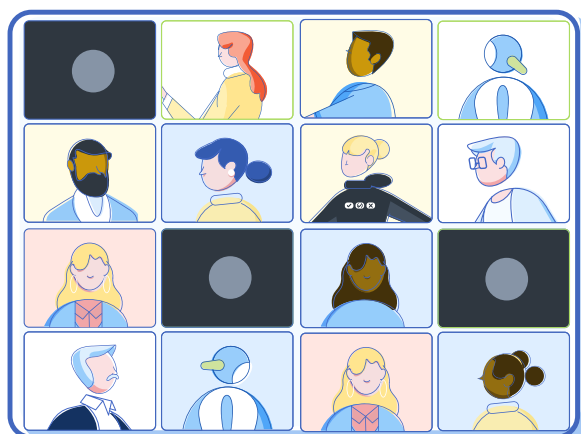


### QoQ Change, Q2 2020 vs. Q1 2020



It's interesting to see that virtual one-on-one meetings grew significantly more (136 percent) than virtual group meetings (109 percent). One reason may be that many HR, operations, managers and executive

teams were acutely aware of the fears, concerns and challenges being experienced by their workforces amidst the lockdown. While virtual group meetings were certainly taking place, they were likely taking place less frequently than virtual one-to-one meetings. If you think about businesses with large frontline workforces, such as Amazon and Deliveroo, you can imagine the sheer number of virtual one-to-one meetings that took place on a daily basis between operations managers and frontline workers in logistics, transportation and delivery roles. So, it's not surprising that video conferencing company [Zoom](#) saw usage of its software jump 30-fold in April 2020 and counted [more than 300 million daily participants in virtual meetings](#) at its peak.



## MEETING NOTICE ETIQUETTE

### 5-10 Days' Notice Is the Norm, But Sometimes Urgency Calls for Less Than 24 Hours' Warning

We've all been there. It's 3:00 pm and you receive a calendar invite for a meeting that's set to take place in the next few hours (sometimes even minutes). That's very short notice and can often disrupt an employee's flow of concentration and productivity. But as our scheduling platform data indicates, this is more often the exception than the rule.

Our data suggests that meeting organizers prefer to provide a reasonable amount of notice ahead of

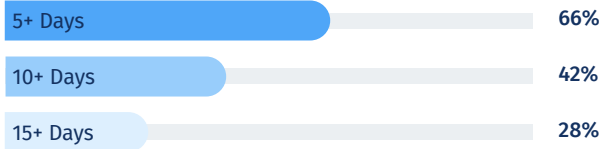
meetings, but that they also like to book the meetings relatively soon. In Q2 2020, 66 percent of the meetings provided at least 5 days' notice to participants. This was the clear winner when it came to notice etiquette, followed by 10+ days (42 percent) and 15+ days (28 percent).

We also looked at the patterns of short-notice meetings being scheduled. Although short-notice meetings aren't the norm in most workplaces, they can still occur. While only 5 percent of the meetings gave a notice period of 24 hours or less, it's somewhat more common for up to 48 hours' notice (10 percent) and 72 hours' notice (16 percent) to be given. Our data also shows that, in very rare cases, less than a



minute's notice (21 seconds) could be given. Such short notice periods would indicate that an emergency situation or time-critical change has arisen and requires a last-minute meeting to share the information with employees in real-time.

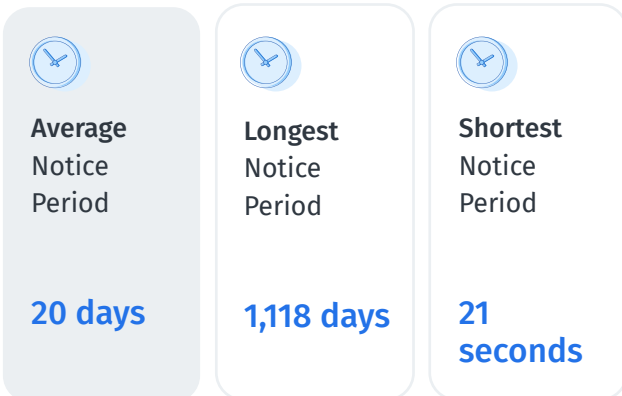
### Longer Notice Periods, Q2 2020



### Shorter Notice Periods, Q2 2020



### Meeting Notice Etiquette, Q2 2020



In the case of mass layoffs at an organization, HR may send the laid off employees a [meeting invitation](#) within seconds before they are asked to meet with them to discuss the details of their layoff (i.e. severance pay, health insurance, tax obligations, references, etc.). As most likely occurred in March when businesses around the world mandated that their entire workforces work from home indefinitely, the C-suite or HR teams at these organizations most likely sent calendar invitations for all-hands meetings within a matter of minutes. In times of crisis, such as the coronavirus pandemic, it's nearly impossible to avoid this.

Meanwhile the maximum amount of notice given before a meeting was 1,118 days. This could be related to the complex, long-term planning that is required for annual shareholder meetings and industry conferences. Such events require extensive preparation, involve multiple stakeholders, typically invite thousands of attendees and must be planned well in advance to ensure the events are successful.

### Scenarios where short meeting notice may be given:

- Mass layoffs are planned at an organization
- Restructuring of organization
- Executive team shake-up/departures
- Time-critical updates to staff in response to a crisis
- Financial and operational challenges that could impact workers
- Personal emergencies that require help/attention from others

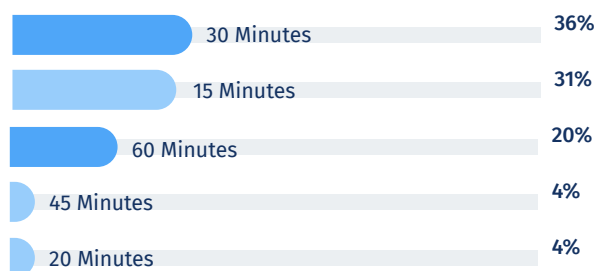
# DURATION & SIZE IMPACT MEETING EFFECTIVENESS

## The Magic of 15-Minute & 30-Minute Meetings

Over the years, it's become common practice for employees to [schedule one-hour meetings](#) as the default, even if they don't necessarily need the full hour. This is often done to ensure meetings don't go over the allotted time and to allow enough time for all participants to contribute, share ideas and make decisions.

But in a [TIME article](#), Jim Whitehurst, President and CEO of Red Hat, a cybersecurity company with more than 8,000 employees across 80 countries, called out the inefficiencies of one-hour meetings and suggested an outright ban on them.

Top 5 Most Popular Meeting Durations, Q2 2020



“ There are few times matters cannot be discussed and handled in 30 minutes or less, so why have we decided one hour as the norm? Setting shorter time periods for your meetings sends a message to attendees that it will be a focused, productive meeting. An agenda always helps too. ”

**Jim Whitehurst, President and CEO, Red Hat**

It turns out Whitehurst may have been onto something. In Q2 2020, the most popular meeting durations were 30 minutes (36 percent) and 15 minutes (31 percent). One-hour meetings, on the other hand, seemed to have fallen out of favor as the default meeting duration (20 percent). Interestingly, the five most popular meeting durations (30 minutes, 15 minutes, 60 minutes, 45 minutes and 20 minutes), when combined, accounted for 95 percent of the total meetings booked in Q2 2020.

Our data suggests that employees aren't blindly following old-school scheduling practices (i.e. setting the meeting duration to one hour as a default). Rather, they are questioning scheduling norms and readjusting their approach - all for the sake of gaining back control of their time, [bringing greater efficiencies to their work lives](#) and making more of an impact within their business.

It's not surprising to see that 15-minute meetings were popular in Q2 2020. One type of meeting that is often limited to 15 minutes is a stand-up meeting. Standups typically occur daily and require participants to stand as a reminder to keep things concise. Teams often use stand-up meetings to quickly touch base, report on progress and call out important items that require attention.

Another reason to hold a 15-minute meeting, especially during the current coronavirus pandemic, could be to touch base and check in on the emotional needs of employees. Keeping meetings limited to 15 minutes allows for the conversation to be more relaxed and minimizes the likelihood of wasting time in unproductive meetings (a common complaint voiced by meeting participants).

## The Power of Smaller Group Meetings

Duration isn't the only factor that influences the success of meetings. Group size matters too, as it can directly influence the [productivity and effectiveness of meetings](#). In many cases, smaller is actually better. As Google Co-Founder Larry Page once said: "Small groups of people can have a really huge impact."

Upon looking closely at our platform data, we noticed a trend that falls in line with Larry Page's philosophy. The meeting size of almost half (44 percent) of the group meetings was limited to four to seven people. But 24 percent of the meetings booked in Q2 2020 were even smaller, with just four to five participants.

We firmly believe meeting organizers should be selective and strategic in deciding who to invite to meetings. Only those people who will actively contribute and make a strong impact should be included in meetings. But oftentimes, we see organizers inviting a large number of people to meetings because they don't want people to feel excluded from the process. But in reality, a good portion of group meeting participants end up being

meeting fillers, don't really play an active role in the process and don't make an impact on the purpose/goals of the meeting.

Interestingly, some group meetings were so large that they consisted of 2,139 participants. These meetings were likely to be all-hands/town halls, annual shareholder meetings, industry association meetings and similar meetings that require large-scale attendance (i.e. entire workforces, industry association members, conference attendees/sponsors and corporate shareholders).



**Average Size**  
**9 People**

**Largest Size**  
**2,139 People**

In these cases, there is certainly no way to keep the meeting size small. To make sure these large-scale meetings are focused, efficient and produce desirable outcomes, organizers must plan properly (and well in advance), coordinate across multiple stakeholders (internal and external), do the prep work ahead of time, provide clear agendas and follow up with action items, owners and deadlines.

### Top 10 Most Common Meeting Sizes, Q2 2020

People	5	4	6	7	3	8	9	2	10	11
%	12%	12%	11%	9%	8%	7%	6%	4%	4%	4%



# AMERICAN MEETING STYLE: COLLABORATIVE OVERLOAD & BURNED OUT

## Americans Love Meetings, But Do Meetings Love Them?

Collaboration is a good thing, right? For the most part, yes. But when it's compounded by too many emails and meetings, it can have the exact opposite effect you want: inefficiency. As our ["Growing Client Loyalty Remotely" study](#) found, meeting overload, particularly in the current situation where all meetings are taking place online, can also lead to stress, exhaustion and burnout.

When we looked at our platform data for Q2 2020, we noticed that there is no time in the workday when Americans are less likely to have meetings, except for 12:00 pm noon when there was a slight dip to 9 percent (from 10 percent at 11:00 am). But then the percentage of meetings jumps up to 13 percent just one hour later, at 1:00 pm. This shows a clear pattern: Americans are always meeting and always working.

If Americans are over-scheduling their workdays with too many meetings, this could directly impact their ability to get work done, cause delays in larger projects and affect their individual performance. As a result, they are likely to make up for 'lost time' by completing work outside of business hours. That leads them right back to being overworked, stressed and burned out.

The United States, as a nation, has become synonymous with a culture of overworking. According to the [ILO](#), Americans work 260 more hours per year than British workers and 499 more hours per year than French workers. And while at least 134 countries have laws in place to limit the number of working hours each week, the United States has no such laws.

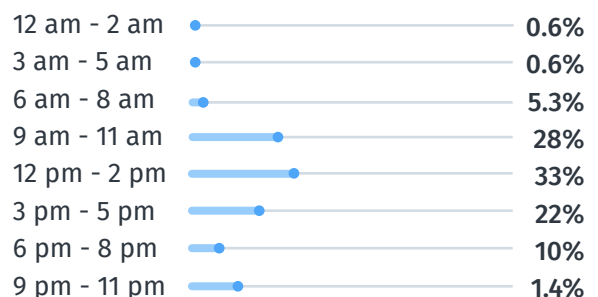
According to a [study by Accountemps](#), 44 percent of American professionals are most productive in the early morning and 31 percent in the late morning. The study also indicated that employees should avoid scheduling meetings at noon, as just 2 percent of the respondents said they get the most work done at lunchtime. However, our platform data reveals

that Americans aren't taking full advantage of their productivity 'flow' in the mornings. In particular, 33 percent of American meetings were booked between the morning hours of 7:00 am and 11:00 am. Remember, this is the same time period that the Accountemps study found to be the most productive for American professionals.

Interestingly, just a little more than 7 percent of American meetings took place between the evening hours of 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm. While this might seem surprising to some, we believe this may actually contribute to the country's overworking culture. Here's why. Because Americans are scheduling so many meetings during the actual workday (between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm), they are purposely keeping their evenings meeting-free. But, they are likely using that evening time to catch up on work they couldn't finish due to the excessive number of meetings booked during the workday.

In contrast, evening meetings (between 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm) occurred more frequently in other countries, such as the United Kingdom (20 percent), France (16 percent), Germany (19 percent) and Switzerland (18 percent). This indicates that Europeans are a bit more judicious with their time during their workday and are more strategic about when they schedule meetings so as to not interrupt their peak productivity zones.

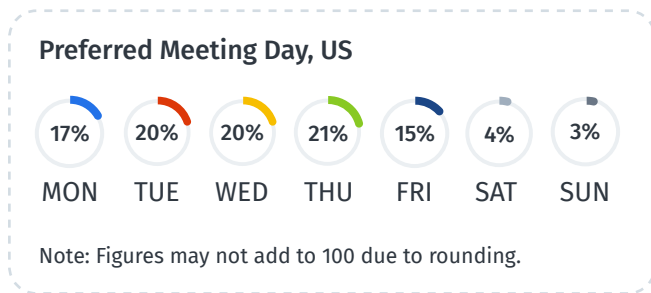
### Preferred Meeting Time, US



Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## Thursday Is the Best Day for Peak Productivity and Meetings

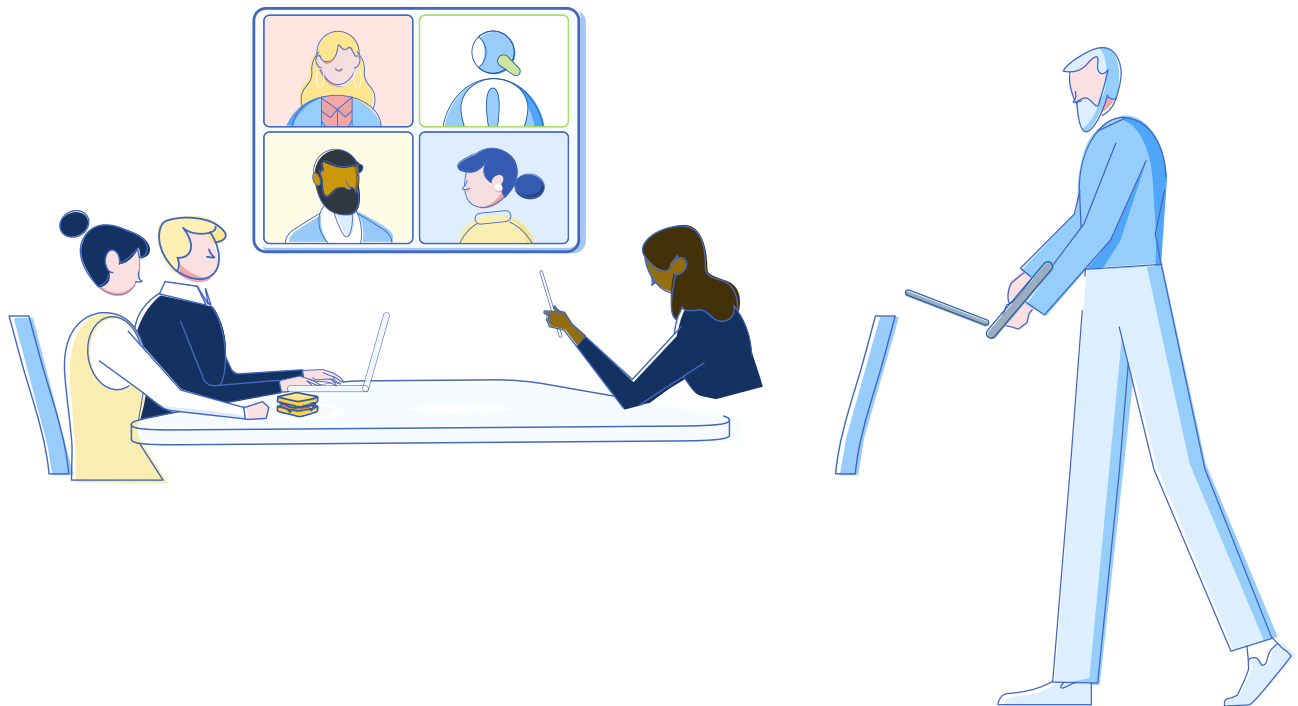
A [recent article in Inc](#) professed that Thursday is the day of peak productivity, connection and business. As our data reveals, this is particularly true for American workers with Thursday (21 percent) being the day when the most meetings were scheduled.



You might be wondering what makes Thursday so special for workplace productivity. According to Damon Brown, entrepreneur and author of *The Bite-Sized Entrepreneur*, “By Thursday, you’ve gotten into a rhythm after three days of focus. The weekend

is long gone. You also have the momentum from getting through the week. Top challenges have been met and conversations begun earlier in the week have been continuing without the interruption of the weekend.”

Our data also indicates that Americans are less likely to organize (or participate in) meetings on Mondays (17 percent) and Fridays (15 percent). There are a few reasons for this. First, employees have had the weekend to decompress and refresh. As such, Monday mornings can be a time of peak productivity. So why would they waste that time in meetings when they’re deep in the zone and able to give their undivided attention to important projects? On top of that, it’s become common for employees to take Mondays off (for a long weekend to relax, or a weekend getaway). By scheduling a meeting on Monday, the organizer could very well see a higher number of no-shows, which could then require having to set up follow-up meetings and jeopardize the timely completion and success of projects.

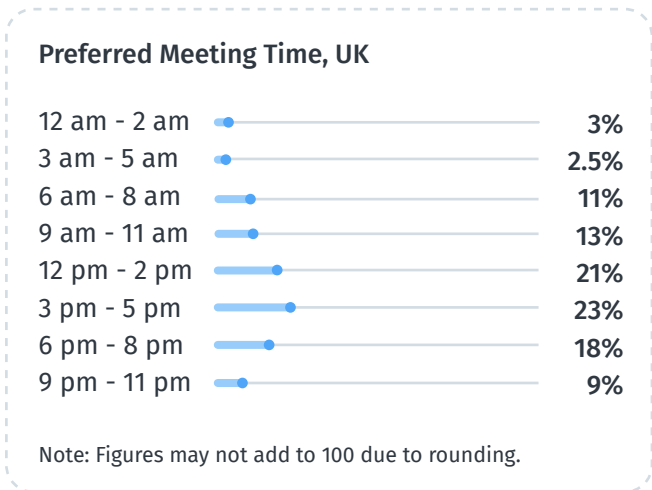


# BRITISH MEETING STYLE: EARLY RISERS & FOCUSED PRODUCTIVITY

## Meetings Are Not Welcome During the Early Mornings

Research from CV-Library shows that the British tend to be early risers, with 35 percent waking up at 5:30 am. But just because the British are early risers doesn't mean they'd be inclined to schedule (or take part in) meetings during those early hours. Rather, the CV-Library study reveals that four in 10 British professionals use that time to catch up on emails first thing, while 31 percent read the news and 29 percent schedule the day ahead. These behavioral patterns could explain why so few meetings (7 percent) were actually booked into British calendars between the early morning hours of 5:00 am and 7:00 am.

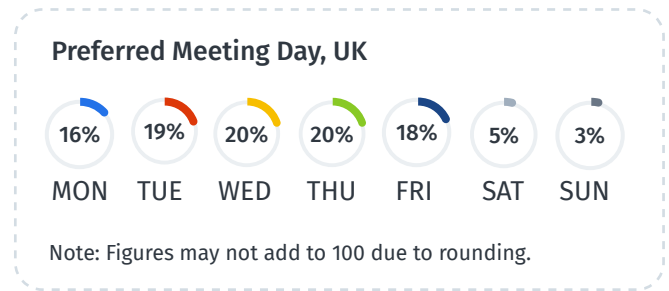
Our platform data also suggests that the mid-afternoon hours are a prime meeting time for British. In particular, 24 percent of the meetings occurred post-lunch, between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm. When we looked at the hour of the day when the most meetings took place, 2:00 pm came out in the top spot (9 percent) above all other times in the day. This could be due to the fact that, after eating lunch, British professionals get a surge of energy and motivation. And so, they may be more inclined to capitalize on that renewed energy to attend meetings and lend their help, insights and value to the projects being discussed.



## Wednesday & Thursday Tie for Top Spot in British Schedules

Similar to their American counterparts, British workers prefer to slot the majority of their meetings into the middle of the week, leaving more time on Mondays to concentrate and complete important tasks. So, what days in British calendars are more likely to be filled with meetings? Based on our platform data, the answer is both Wednesdays (20 percent) and Thursdays (20 percent).

It's also interesting to see that weekend meetings are highly unusual for British, with only 5 percent taking place on Saturdays and 3 percent on Sundays. The British, for the most part, are protective about their personal time and are highly unlikely to organize or participate in meetings that cut into their weekends.



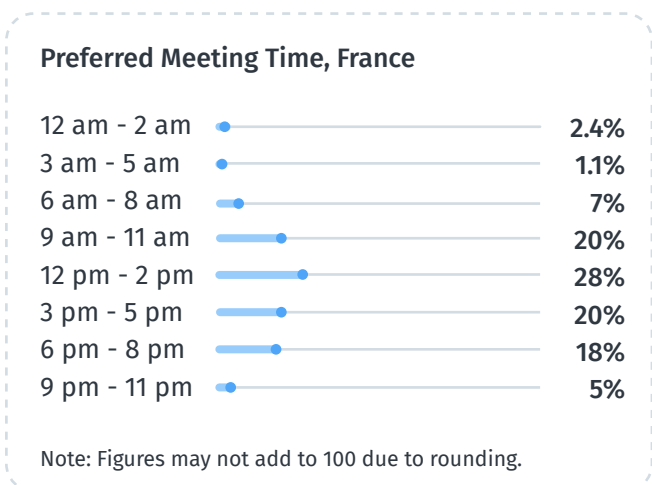


# FRENCH MEETING STYLE: RELATIONSHIP-BUILDERS & POST-LUNCH MEETINGS

## Lunch Breaks Are Sacred and Off Limits for Meetings

As we looked at the preferred meeting times in France, one thing was clear: lunch breaks are sacred and off limits for meetings. In particular, only 4 percent of the meetings took place at 12:00 pm.

Unlike their American counterparts who often eat lunch at their desks (or take short breaks), it's quite common for French professionals to stop working exactly at 12:00 pm (or 12:30 pm) to gather in the company's kitchen/cafeteria, eat with coworkers and catch up on their lives. While 12:00 pm meetings were very rare in Q2 2020, there was a significant spike in the number of meetings scheduled just two hours later, at 2:00 pm (18 percent).

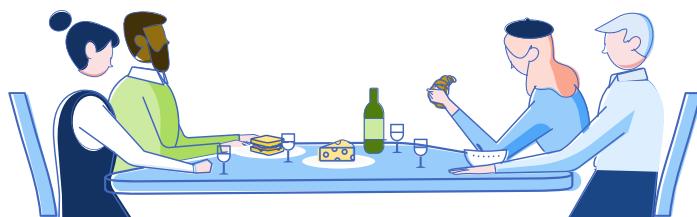
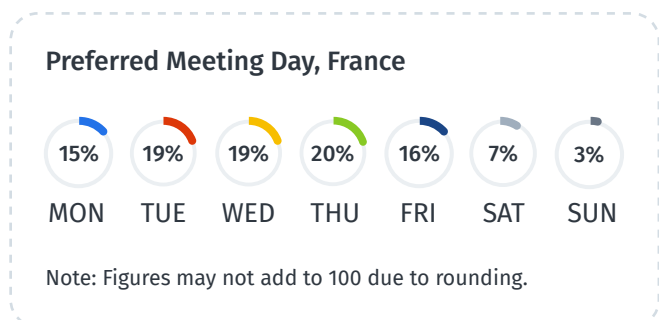


According to an [article in BusinessCulture.org](#), the best time to schedule meetings in French workplaces is in the late morning or mid-afternoon - usually any time between 11:00 am and 3:30 pm. The data from our scheduling platform supports this, with 40 percent of French meetings scheduled between the hours of 11:00 am and 3:00 pm. It's also been said that French business professionals like to plan out their schedules well in advance, with at least two weeks notice. And as we explained earlier, the average notice period given ahead of meetings was 20 days.

Interestingly, there was a sharp drop off in the number of meetings scheduled after 8:00 pm, signalling that French workers reserve their evenings for personal time with family and friends. The 'right to disconnect' law, which was enacted in France on January 1, 2017, may have something to do with this. The law allows employees to disconnect from their work and to not receive or answer any work-related emails, calls or messages outside of normal working hours.

## Thursday Meetings Are Optimal, But Tuesday and Wednesday Work Too

According to our platform data, Thursday meetings (20 percent) are most common in France. But Tuesdays (19 percent) and Wednesdays (19 percent) are also considered acceptable. Interestingly, weekend meetings occur slightly more often in France (10 percent) than they do in the United Kingdom (8 percent) and the United States (7 percent). Saturday meetings, in particular, are more likely to occur than Sunday meetings.



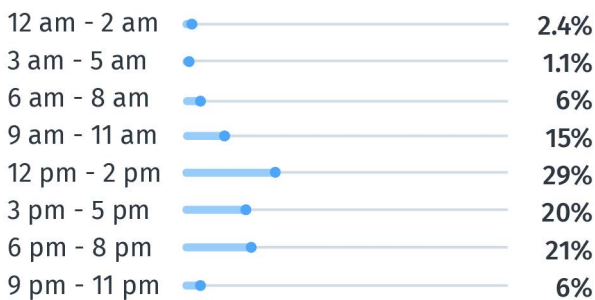
# GERMAN MEETING STYLE: PUNCTUAL & WEEKEND WARRIORS

## The Bulk of German Meetings Happen in Mid-Late Afternoon

German professionals are known for their punctuality. Arriving late to meetings is a no-no in German work culture. It's disrespectful, leads to unnecessary delays and decreases overall productivity.

In looking at our platform data, we noticed that over half (57 percent) of German meetings were scheduled in the mid-late afternoon, between 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm. One inference that can be made from this finding is that the mornings are regarded as a time for deep focus, attention to important projects and peak productivity. So, German professionals would rather slot meetings into the second half of their workday so they can spend the morning hours doing 'deep' work and getting organized for the rest of the day.

### Preferred Meeting Time, Germany



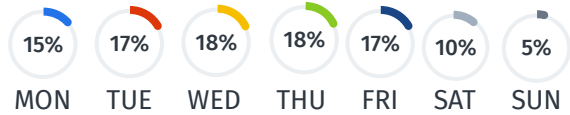
Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## Weekend Meetings Aren't So Unusual

Our platform data suggests that Germans may not be as protective of their personal time as their British and French counterparts. For example, 15 percent of the German meetings booked in Q2 2020 took place

on Saturday and Sunday. In contrast, weekend meetings were less common in the US (7 percent), UK (8 percent), France (10 percent) and Switzerland (12 percent).

### Preferred Meeting Day, Germany



Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

But this tendency for being available for weekend meetings could come at a high cost. As a [Gallup poll](#) recently revealed, as many as 4.1 million German workers experienced work-related mental or emotional stress. In a [Quartz article](#), the chief executive of Techniker Krankenkasse, one of Germany's leading public health insurance providers, also confirmed that 'lifestyle diseases' are on the rise in Germany, citing the fact that TK customers miss more than 15 days of work a year, on average.

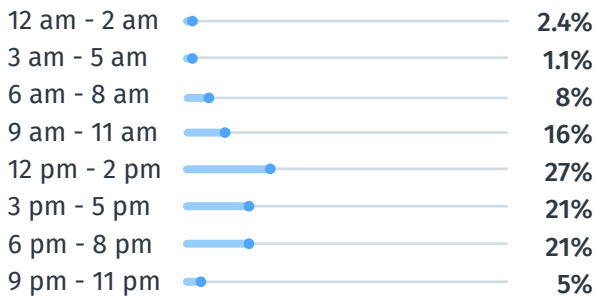


# SWISS MEETING STYLE: STRUCTURED & EVENING MEETINGS

## The Swiss Are Open to Evening Meetings

By law, the maximum number of hours a Swiss company can ask employees to work is 45 hours a week (apart from some manual jobs, which allow a 50-hour workweek). So, we were surprised to see that 18 percent of Swiss meetings were scheduled in the evenings, between 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm.

### Preferred Meeting Time, Switzerland



Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

This could get Swiss companies into legal hot water, if meeting in the late evening hours pushes employees beyond a 45-hour workweek. One way to address this is for Swiss companies to educate and inform their staff about such regulations, while also explaining that such laws exist to ensure a healthy work-life balance and prevent burnout. It's for the employees' benefit.

But overall, Swiss employees tend to have a positive work-life balance (and prioritize it). In fact, the [OECD's Better Life survey](#) found that the share of employees working very long hours in Switzerland is lower than the OECD average.

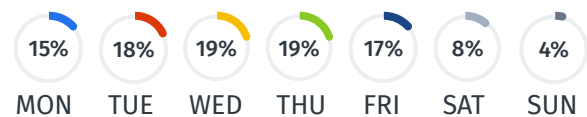
Writing for [Vox](#), author Chantal Panozzo hailed the many benefits of being an expat living and working in Switzerland. More specifically, she talked about how punctuality is key when it comes to meetings. She also talks about how strict and structured the Swiss are about not eating lunch at their desks and taking their lunch breaks exactly at noon.

When we looked at our platform data for Q2 2020, we noticed that, out of every hour in the day, 2:00 pm had the highest concentration of meetings booked (15 percent). As Chantal Panozzo explained, Swiss workers are less inclined to eat their lunch at their desks. Instead, they are likely to take longer lunch breaks and leave the office to enjoy the meal with coworkers, friends or family. So the fact that 2:00 pm was the most popular meeting time in Swiss calendars could be the result of Swiss workers booking in post-lunch meetings to connect with clients, interview candidates or get acquainted with new hires.

## Mid-Week Gets Top Billing in Calendars, But Weekends Aren't Too Far Behind

Like Germany and the United Kingdom, Wednesday (19 percent) and Thursday (19 percent) both ranked as the top meeting days in Switzerland. Given how physically close Germany and Switzerland are in proximity to each other and the cultural similarities between the two countries, we can understand why the data is so similar for both countries. However, the inclination to organize or participate in weekend meetings is slightly less in Switzerland (12 percent), compared to Germany (15 percent).

### Preferred Meeting Day, Switzerland



Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.



## CONCLUSION

As our report's findings indicate, the COVID-19 pandemic created a major shift in how employees connected and engaged with their teams, colleagues, clients and partners. As a result, many meetings that once took place in-person were transitioned to a fully virtual environment. What resulted is a 109 percent increase in the number of virtual group meetings in Q2 2020, compared to the previous quarter. Similarly, the challenges, fears and concerns faced by employees as a result of the coronavirus pandemic caused a massive spike (136 percent) in virtual one-to-one meetings during the second quarter of 2020.

What we found most interesting and surprising, however, is how unique the meeting styles and

preferences are based on where people are located. In some countries, morning meetings ruled. But in other countries, late nights and weekend meetings dominated. And in each case, there were proof points about the cultural norms and workplace behaviors that validated our data.

For businesses, these findings should prove useful in making strategic choices about how and when meetings are scheduled, planned, conducted - and how those factors impact the overall productivity and effectiveness of meetings. Meetings are critical to the success of businesses. So there is no room for excessive scheduling delays, poor planning and confusion.

## ABOUT DOODLE

Doodle is the leading enterprise scheduling technology helping the world's largest brands instantly set meetings with clients, colleagues and teams. Tapping into the unique nature of smart scheduling with AI and chatbots, Doodle simplifies the planning of 1:1 and group meetings for

professionals. As the world's most trusted online scheduling platform, Doodle has more than 30 million monthly active users. Part of the Swiss media group TX Group, Doodle AG is headquartered in Zurich, with offices in Berlin, Atlanta, New York City and Belgrade.

## CONTACT US

To learn how Doodle can help you get meetings scheduled quickly and effortlessly, [contact our sales team for a product demonstration](#).

If you would like to test out Doodle before committing long-term, you can [get started with a free 14-day trial](#).

If you're a journalist or analyst and would like to request more information about this report or speak with Doodle CEO Renato Profico, please contact our corporate communications/PR team at [press@doodle.com](mailto:press@doodle.com).