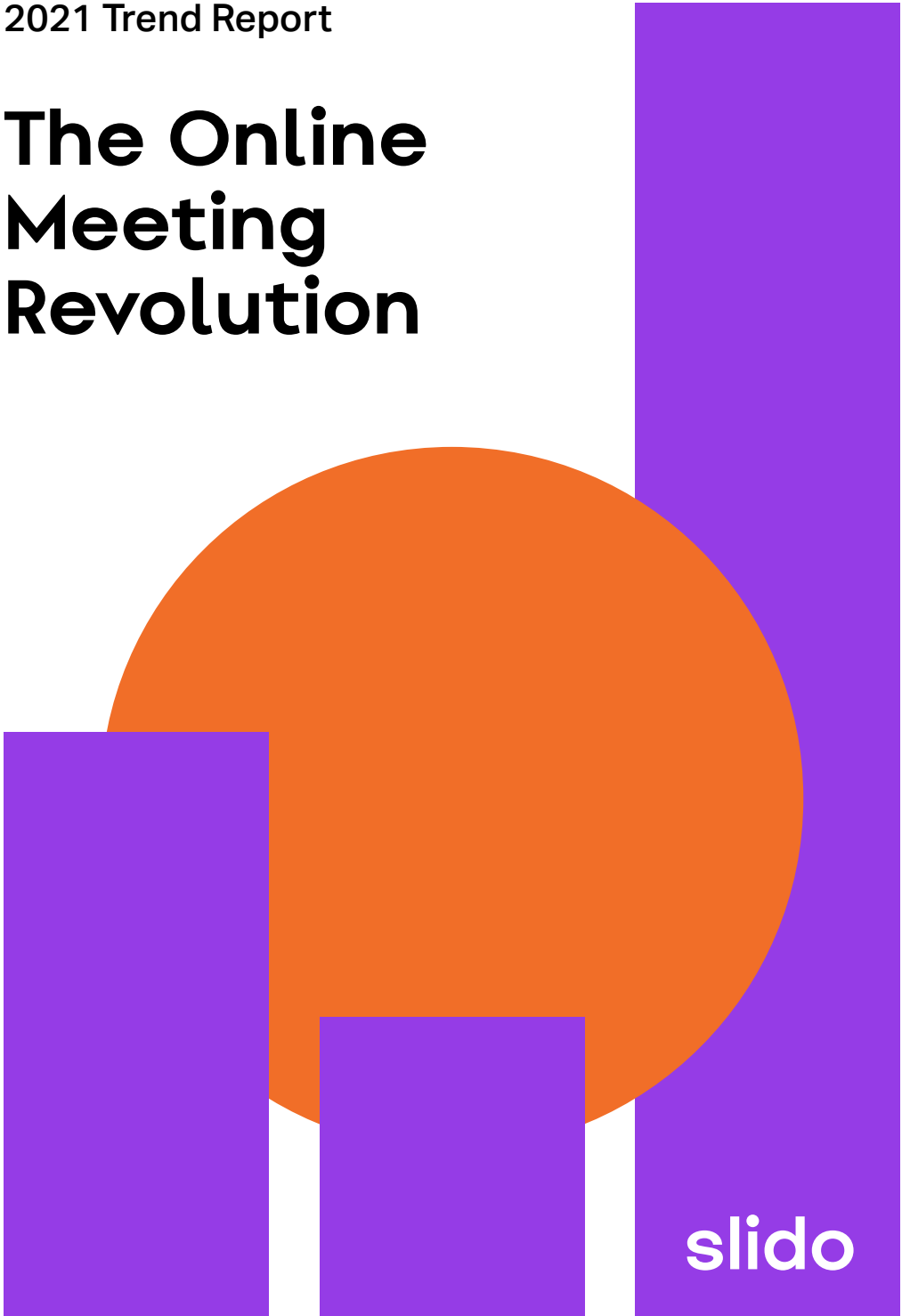


2021 Trend Report

The Online Meeting Revolution



slido

Introduction

The last year has revolutionized the way we work. In a way, our teams have never been more apart. But at the same time, the pandemic has made us more united, resilient, and productive than ever.

Meetings were at the center of it all. They were the glue that held our teams together.

So what do our meetings look like today?

We turned to 1,500 office workers to hear about their experiences. We also spoke to several experts and industry leaders about the role meetings play in our current work environment.

This report identifies three big battles that organizations must win to carry the meeting revolution forward.

The rewards for businesses that adapt will be better staff retention, more democratic meetings, and higher return on investment in meetings that truly matter.

I hope this report will empower you with lots of valuable insights and help you on your way to achieving meeting brilliance.

Peter Komornik — Co-Founder and CEO, Slido

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The State of Meetings

Can online meetings be more engaging
than face to face meetings?



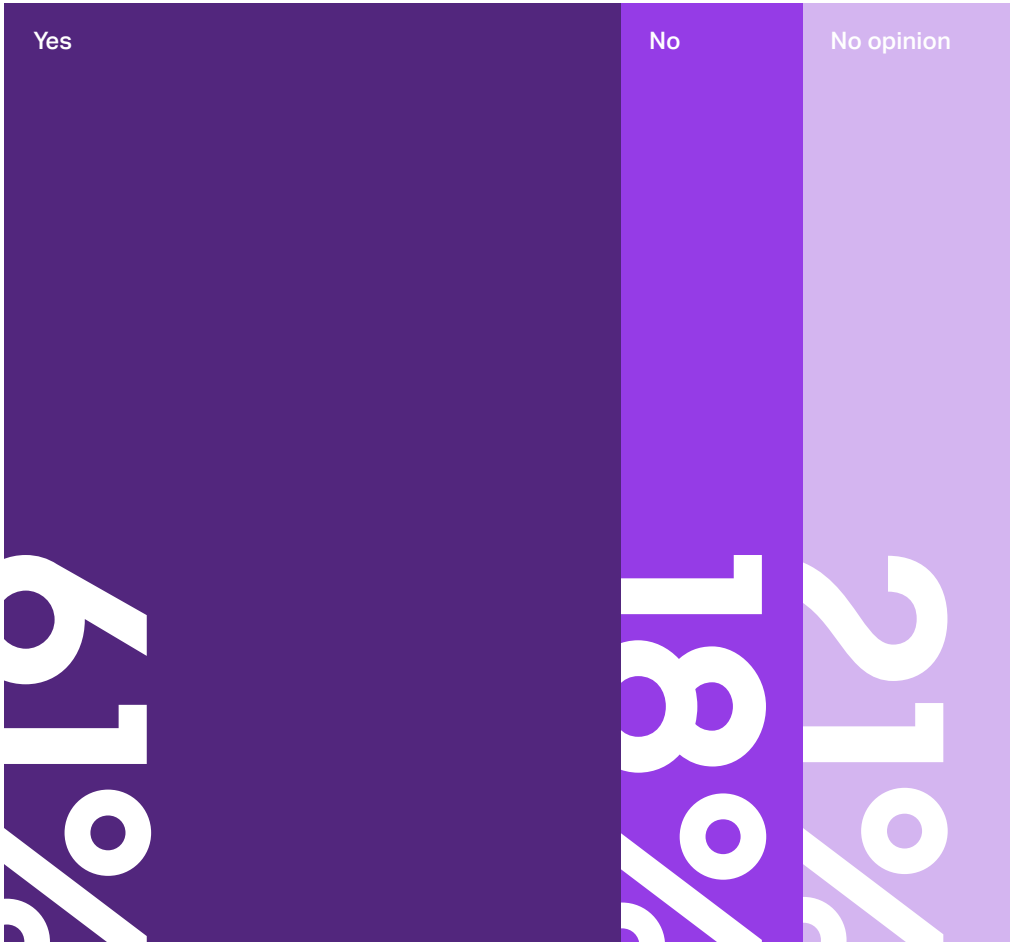
How have our meetings changed one year after the pandemic turned us all into remote workers?

We have probably gotten all too familiar with glitchy WiFi, juggling work and family life in the same room.

You'd think it's only natural that people can't wait to get back to the office. But is this really the case?

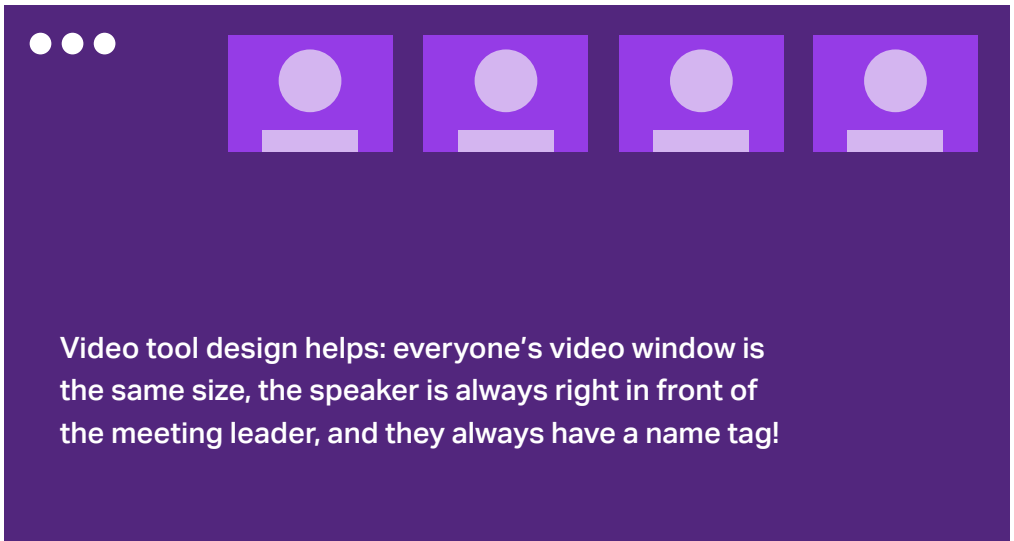
After a year of remote working, a surprising statistic has emerged. 61% of US office workers believe online meetings can be more engaging than face to face meetings.

Do you believe online meetings are more engaging than face to face meetings?



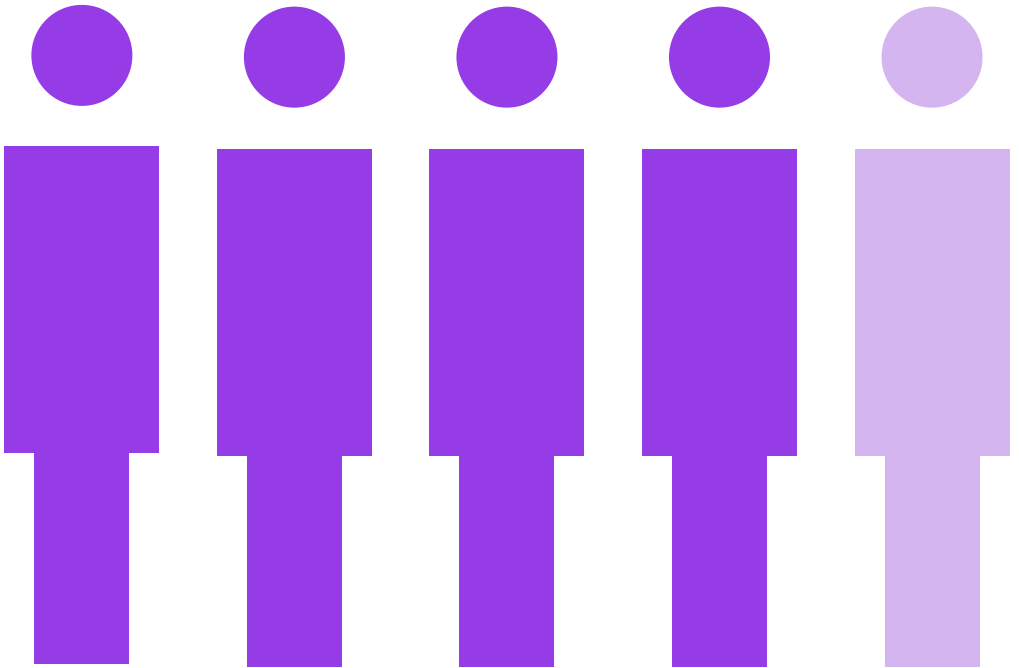
Online meetings are also more democratic in nature.

50% of home workers said their boss listens to them more when they're at home than when they're in the office.



We have more meetings and for more reasons than ever before. With remote work, online meetings are a source of human connection. Team spirit and social capital are now built in meetings.

4 in 5 home workers said they attend more meetings now than they would in the office.

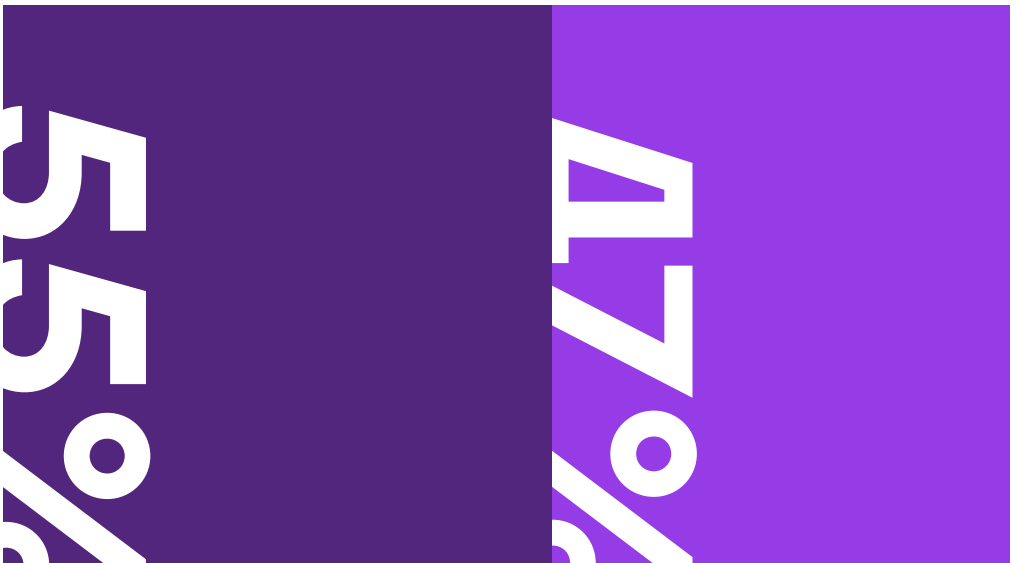


Online meetings bring people together even though they are geographically divided.

But do online meetings live up to their potential?

Online meetings have so much potential to be more engaging than their face to face counterparts. And we see some positive trends, but there is still a long way to go.

In the office, 55% of meetings were unengaging. Online, 47% of remote meetings remain unengaging. We see a step in the right direction, but not a giant leap.



When we asked about meetings in general,

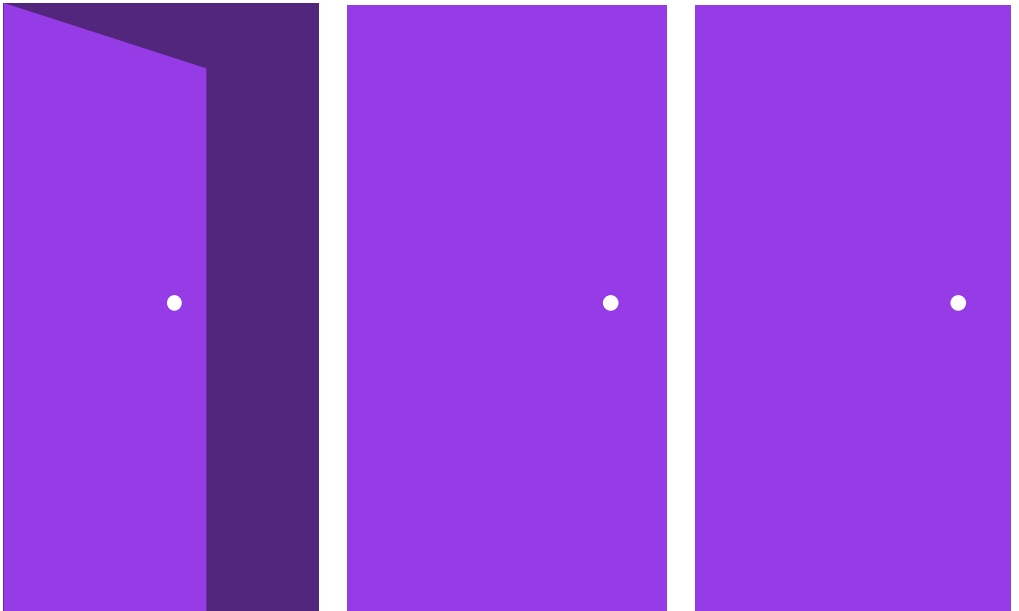
42% of attendees have left a meeting without saying what was on their mind.

Imagine how many things left unsaid were good ideas!

In the USA alone, it's not unreasonable to think that millions of ideas a year may go unheard.

What happens to those ideas?

1 in 3 US office workers who couldn't say what was on their minds said they'd left meetings thinking of getting another job.



In this day and age, with so many engagement tools and best practices at hand, there is no reason for people to feel unengaged or unable to contribute.



In a world where opportunity isn't evenly spread, but talent is, technology can deliver a more inclusive way to collaborate and play an important role in levelling the playing field. It can allow for equal voices across the board, regardless of geography, language, proficiency with technology, and personality type. At the end of the day, what matters is that the best idea wins; technology can enable the extraction of those ideas.

— Jeetu Patel, SVP and General Manager,
Security and Collaboration, Cisco

59% of new home workers found meeting technology to be better than expected.



Meeting Brilliance

Identifying the barriers on the way
to more engaging meetings



Unengaging meetings are a big threat to staff retention and they block great ideas from spreading.

Organizations often don't recognize the problem.

The first step towards more engaging meetings, for any business, is identifying what makes meetings engaging in the first place.

What makes a meeting engaging?



Often, businesses tend to be overconfident about their meetings.

69% of meeting organizers think their meetings are more engaging than average in the organization. They can't all be right, can they?

The data show a different story.

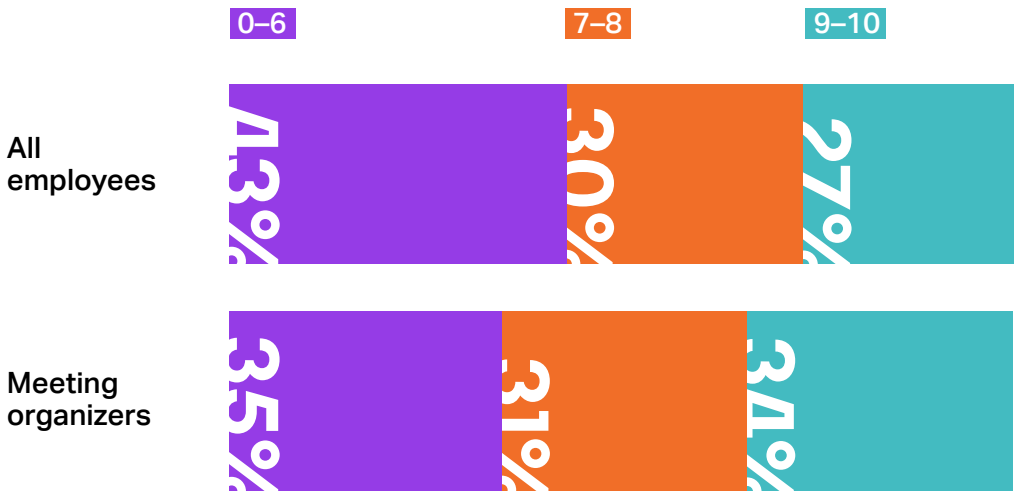
For this reason, Slido has developed the **Meeting Brilliance Score (MBS)**.

Just as the NPS (Net Promoter Score) establishes a company's potential for growth, the MBS establishes their potential for getting the best out of people in meetings.

It is based on the following question, which can be used in employee pulse surveys:

To what extent would you recommend your employer to a business writer who wants to write about an organization that consistently runs highly productive and engaging meetings (both online and offline)?

The scale is 0-10, from very unlikely to very likely.

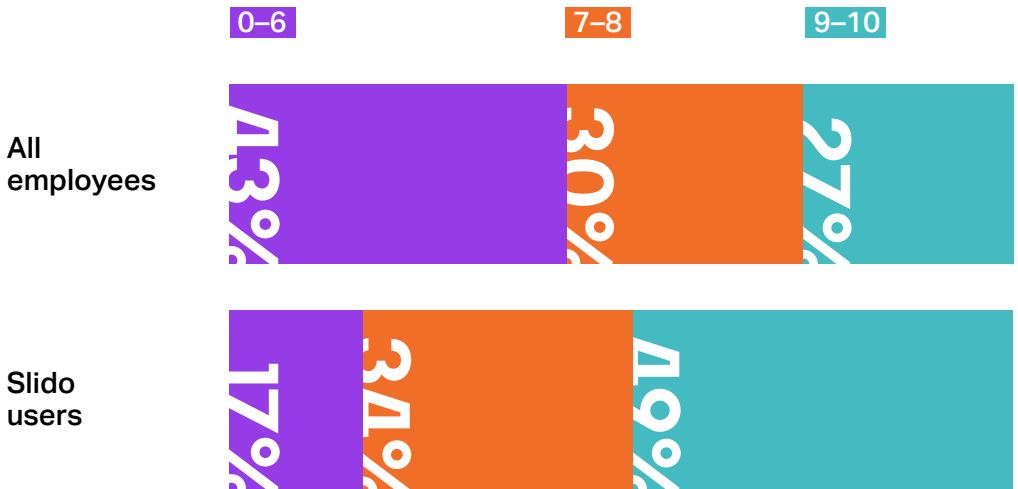


We pitched this question to our respondent US office workers and meeting organizers.

The results show that meeting organizers have a more optimistic view, with 34% giving a score of 9 or 10. But only 27% of employees think their organization’s meetings are consistently high quality.

Using the MBS score, we also compared all respondents (both meeting attendees and meeting organizers) with those who use Slido.

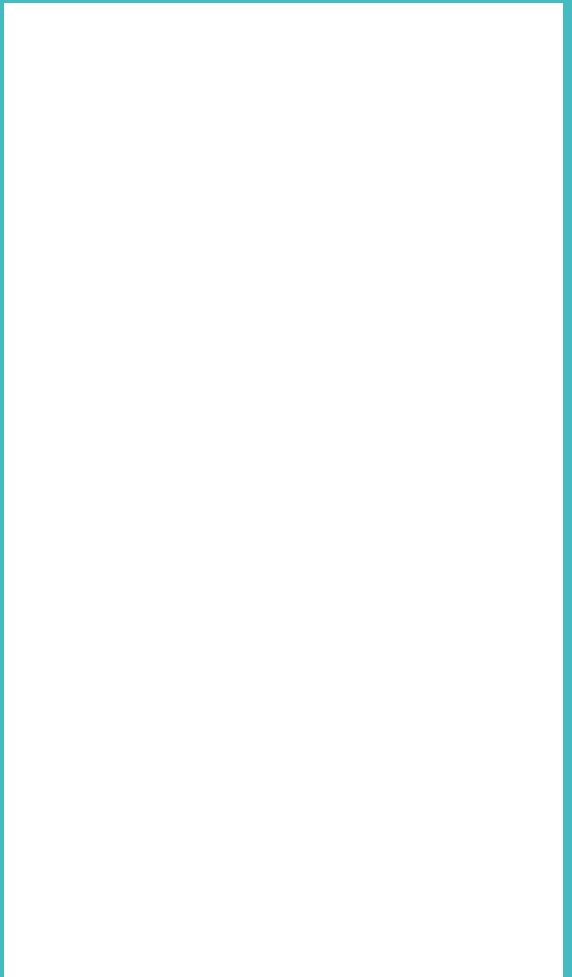
49% of Slido users think the organization they work for is excellent at running engaging and productive meetings.



This may imply that Slido users care about making their meetings more engaging, but it's also likely that Slido itself creates engaging and productive meetings. (We like to think so!)

The Action Plan

A 3-Step battle plan for more engaging meetings



Based on the insights that we learned from the survey respondents, as well as our interviews with industry-leading meeting experts, we crafted this battle plan to set your organization on the road to meeting brilliance:

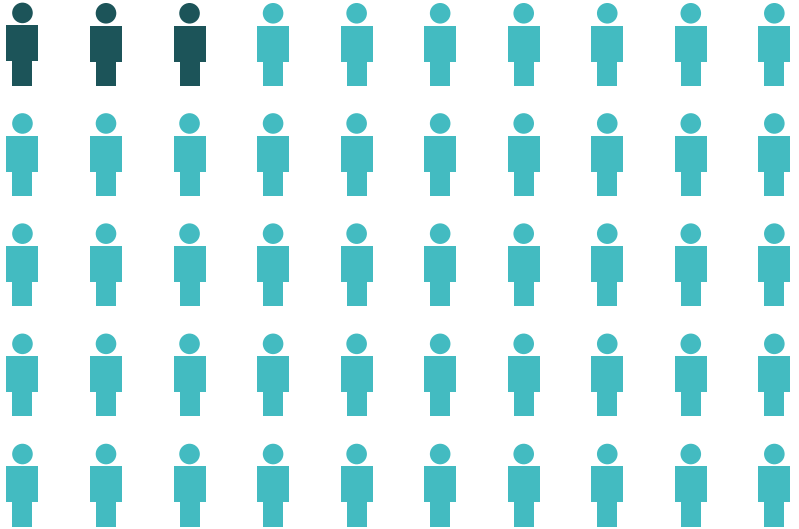
- 1. The battle for more democratic meetings**
- 2. Improving ROMI**
- 3. Bridging the skills gap**

1. The battle for more democratic meetings

53% think quietly



47% think aloud



While 47% of people think aloud in meetings, 53% think quietly and speak occasionally. The ideas of more than half are prone to die in the noise. Unequal airtime and the failure to include everyone are problems that can easily be overcome these days.



The reality is that meetings have been broken for a while. It's an area that has stayed static and overlooked for too long. This makes no sense, given the business-critical nature of running good meetings.

— Bill Macaitis, Growth advisor, former CMO at Zendesk & Slack, former SVP at Salesforce



If firms give voice to the quieter people in the virtual room, their contributions can be astonishingly valuable. Quieter people are often willing to speak up collectively but not individually. In other words, putting an item to a vote - and including a plurality of options - is often a way to elicit a strong opinion from a quiet person.

— Bruce Daisley, bestselling author, consultant and ex-Twitter VP EMEA

Tips to win this battle:



#1 Think hard about who needs to be invited

When it comes to your meeting guest list, stop thinking in numbers. Instead, consider the meeting's purpose, and let that dictate your guest and meeting size. For example, if you want to explore a topic that impacts all levels of your business, it may help to have more representatives contributing in real time. The beauty of virtual meetings is that you aren't limited by room size, or a catering budget!

— Leanne Hughes, International Facilitator and Host of the First Time Facilitator Podcast

#2 Make team decisions democratically

Polling makes team decisions democratic and politically neutral. Every vote has the same impact – regardless of the person's role, or their previous influence over decisions.

Open a team discussion by getting people to vote on the poll first, e.g. *Should we keep our weekly meetings?* In an instant, you can see what people really think. Then debrief the results by asking people to share how they voted.



#3 Use tech to empower everyone to contribute

Embracing changes to meetings such as tech integration also allows you to get the most out of your employees. You'll be able to engage with all types of thinkers and personality types, democratising meetings and ensuring everyone feels respected and listened to.

— Bill Macaitis, Growth advisor, former CMO at Zendesk & Slack, former SVP at Salesforce

#4 Collect input in advance

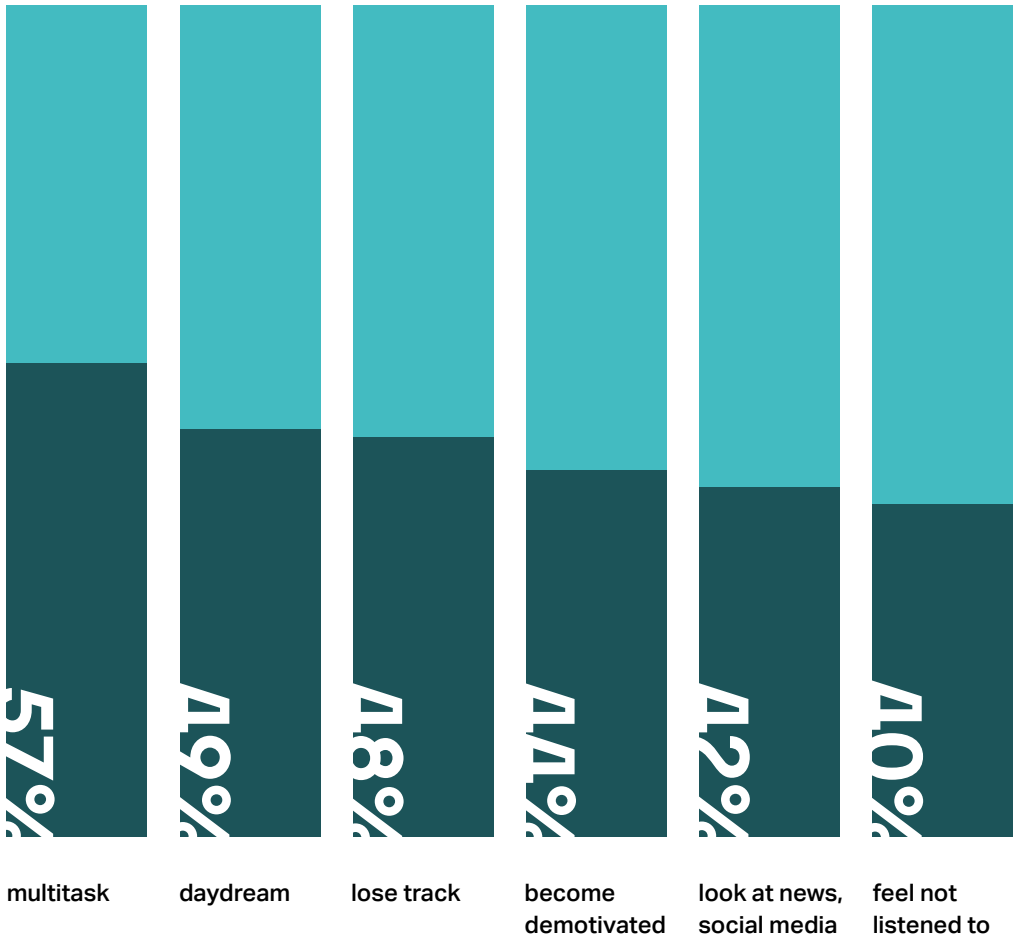
Give people time to think and contribute ideas before the meeting, for example with a Q&A and polling tool. Instead of asking people to reflect on their feet, collect comments days ahead. In the meeting, you can then spend most of the time having a relevant discussion. This saves time and is inclusive to everyone, regardless of how vocal they are or what time zone they're in.

#5 Make hybrid meetings inclusive for everyone

In a hybrid setup, make sure your remote colleagues don't feel excluded from the discussion. Keep the side conversations in the room to a minimum, have everyone in the room face the camera, and check in regularly with your remote teammates. Call on them to contribute verbally or use Q&A and polling tools to give everyone an equal voice.

2. ROMI (Return On Meeting Investment)

The combined salaries of attendees make meetings expensive. Yet 57% often multitask, 48% daydream and 49% lose track of what is being said. Most worry the meeting is eating into their working time.



The top factors that people say make meetings engaging are clear communication (59%), preparation (56%), decisions getting made (56%), time management (54%) and a meeting organizer who listens (50%).

A crucial factor for ROMI is time management. We work with our clients to demonstrate that Slido can save them 10 minutes every hour. The time saved can then be spent making decisions, summarizing, and allocating action points. Meetings can end earlier or on time too.



Technology that allows us to capture what's in the room might allow us to spend less time in meetings. If you can do meetings better, you can free up some of that time.

— Bruce Daisley, bestselling author, consultant and ex-Twitter VP EMEA



Tools that help leaders manage in an inclusive manner, highlighting how this shows up in meetings, could have a major impact on management strategy.

— Jeetu Patel, SVP and General Manager, Security and Collaboration, Cisco

Tips to improve ROMI



#1 Be intentional about meeting design

With all interactions transformed into scheduled meeting time, a significant portion of your employees' experience at work is through a virtual meeting portal. Leads should consider themselves designers of this scheduled, shared time. What is the ideal meeting experience? How can their "customers" - in this case, their teammates - get the most out of this interaction?

— Katie Guzman, Product Management Lead for Growth and Adoption at Asana



#2 Get your guests curious

Get your guests curious about attending your meeting by creating some hype prior. Make the title exciting for a start. If you take a marketing approach to your meeting, you might find your guests are more interested and curious about attending.

Would you rather attend: "Status meeting" or "Three big decisions in 30 minutes"? Which title sounds more attractive to you?

— Leanne Hughes, International Facilitator and Host of the First Time Facilitator Podcast

#3 Keep the conversation focused

Kick start a discussion and keep it focused. Fire a poll, for example, *What makes you excited about this project?* And wait for people to vote/share their input. Build the discussion around their submissions and ask your team to share why they voted the way they did. Your discussion will be focused, concentrated, and based on data that you generated in real time.



#4 Measure meeting outcomes

Rethink the metrics you're using to measure meeting success. Don't look at the number of minutes spent in meetings; focus on meeting potency. Measure outcomes.

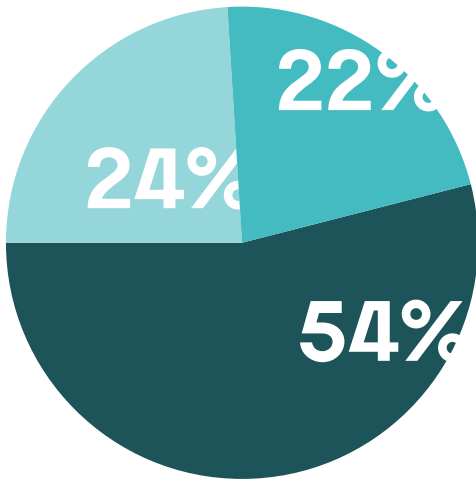
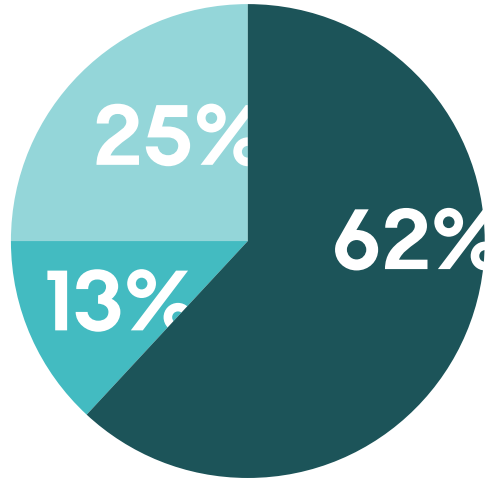
— Jeetu Patel, SVP and General Manager,
Security and Collaboration, Cisco

#5 Collect feedback on your meetings

When you're stepping out of an UBER, you get a notification to rate the ride. Why not ask participants to rate the meeting before you let them go? Run a short survey in Slido with two or three questions. Use a rating poll and let people put 1-5 stars on how much they enjoyed it. Leave an open-text box so people can share ideas for improvements. Then take the feedback on board and make it better next time. People will appreciate that you listened.

3. Bridging the skills gap

62% of home workers think their manager needs training to get the best out of remote teams.



54% think their manager needs to get better at facilitating discussions in meetings.

agree
disagree
no opinion



In time, it will become obvious which businesses made the decision to consciously address the changing world of work, rather than just expecting employees to muddle through on their own. The ability of businesses to retain and engage talent will be a clear marker of this. Strategic use of virtual meetings offers a solution to this problem, so think deliberately about how you can use them to your advantage and bring back the magic.

— Katie Guzman, Product Management Lead for Growth and Adoption at Asana

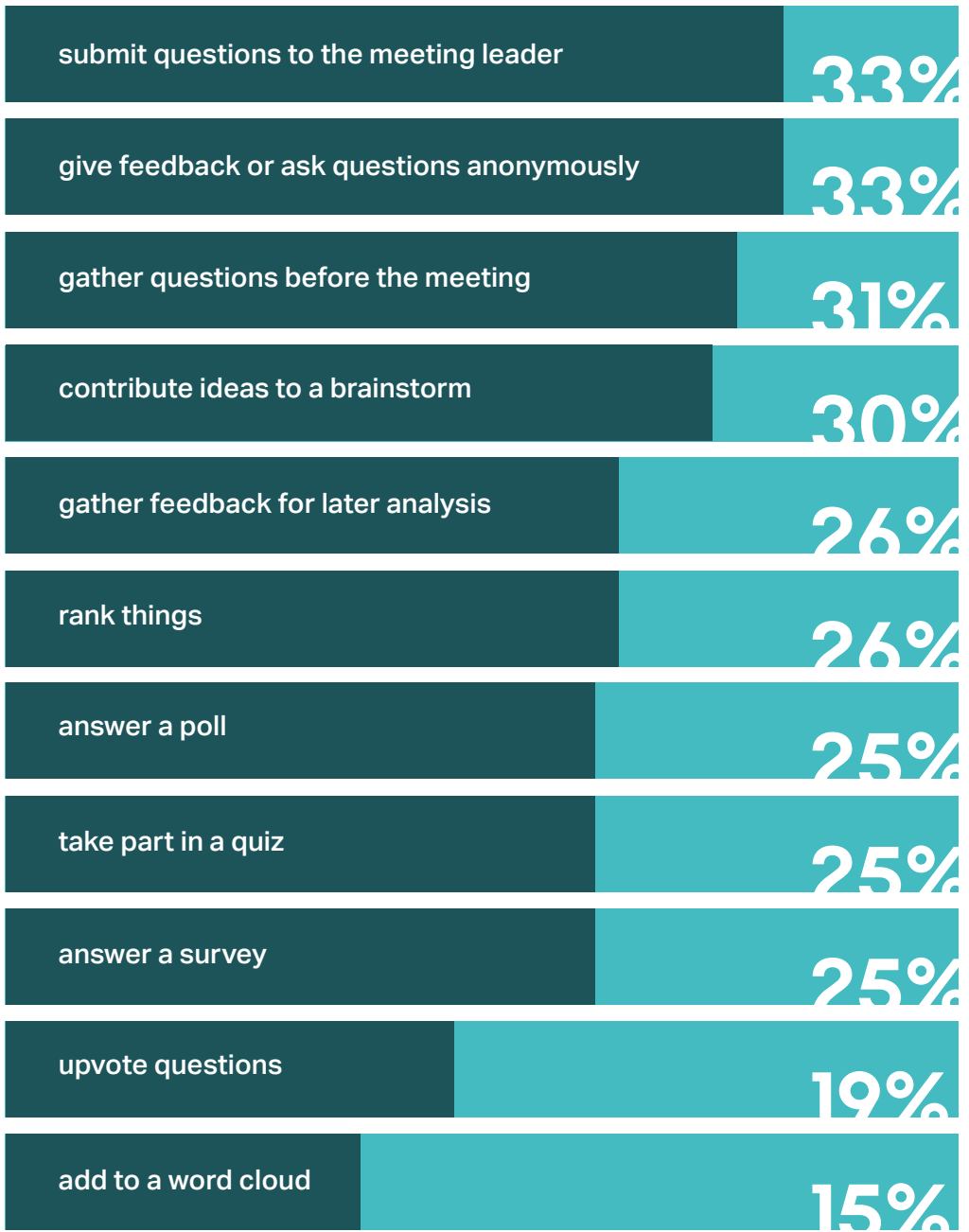


Businesses will need to address existing skills gaps around facilitation with training, to contribute positively to the company's meeting culture.

— Bill Macaitis, Growth advisor, former CMO at Zendesk & Slack, former SVP at Salesforce

To close the gap between the rosy perceptions of meeting organizers and the reality for attendees, you need to address the skills gap.

You could start by teaching audience interaction technology. 86% of meeting attendees said a Q&A/polling tool would have improved their last meeting with 10+ attendees. They felt the following features would have been most useful:



The table shows the percentage who said the relevant application would have been useful in the last meeting they attended that had 10+ attendees.

Tips for bridging the skills gap:



#1 Engage early, engage often

Create engagement from the start to let your team members know you expect them to actively contribute. Start with a simple icebreaker poll, then run a pulse check in the middle, for example: *On a scale from 1-10, how practical is this idea?* By the end, wrap up the meeting by running an open ended poll: *What's something you'd like clarity on?* After each question response, call a few ideas out and provide a response. It shows that you're listening.

— Leanne Hughes, International Facilitator and Host of the First Time Facilitator Podcast



#2 Set the expectations upfront

As the facilitator, be clear on the goals, and just as clear about non-goals of the meeting to keep the group focused. Be transparent on the meeting's purpose - is it a brainstorm, update or decision meeting? Share these goals, intentions and agenda in advance to give your participants the opportunity to contribute, or even just prepare their thoughts. You should see a more equal distribution of participation.

— Katie Guzman, Product Management Lead for Growth and Adoption at Asana

#3 Let the team be the star of the show

As a meeting facilitator, you shouldn't be the talker. Be the guide that will help your team get the most out of the meeting. Set out the objective, plan activities, ask stimulating questions, and guide the group discussions to reach their goal. To do that, you need to ask the right questions. E.g. *What is your opinion? Can you elaborate on it? What are some opposing arguments? What else?*



#4 Delegate responsibilities and tasks

If you have groups meeting with over 10 people, delegate responsibilities. Appoint different meeting owners or assign accountabilities across the group - such as timekeepers, scribes, or guest speakers. One of the easiest ways to build engagement is to give people these roles, and skin in the game.

— Leanne Hughes, International Facilitator and Host of the First Time Facilitator Podcast

#5 Read the virtual room

Watch out for when someone unmutes themselves. It's a signal that they might want to contribute. You can invite them to speak by name. For example, *Sam, I've noticed that you unmuted yourself. Would you like to add something?* It's much easier for some people to speak up when you empower them.

Final Thoughts

Remote work has sparked an unexpected revolution towards more engaging, democratic, and inclusive meetings.

They're within reach for every leader willing to embrace the new skills and practices necessary for creating the best possible meeting experiences for their teams.

This report identified the three battles meeting leaders must win to complete the online meeting revolution.

We hope it has inspired you and armed you with practical tips and ideas to maximize the potential of your online meetings, and thus the potential of your teams.

About Slido

Slido is the industry-leading audience interaction platform. It helps users get the most out of meetings and events by crowdsourcing top questions and engaging participants with live polls and quizzes.

Slido can be used by anyone looking to enable open conversation in live or virtual meetings—from internal communications professionals to team leaders, conference organizers, and individual presenters.

Slido works with popular video conferencing and presentation platforms, integrating seamlessly with Microsoft Teams, PowerPoint, and Google Slides.

Since its foundation in 2012, Slido has been used at over 1.5 million events and engaged 65 million active participants. Slido has been adopted by high-profile clients, including Asana, BBC, Oracle, and renowned conferences such as SXSW, Web Summit, and Money20/20.

Credits

This report is based on two bespoke surveys conducted on Slido's behalf by an independent market research company, Alligator Research Ltd.

The first had 500 respondents. All were based in the US and regularly organized meetings for 10+ attendees.

The fieldwork was conducted in January 2021.

The second had 1,000 respondents who were all US office workers. The fieldwork was conducted in February 2021.

In both cases, the sample was matched to the profile of US office workers by age, sex, and number of employees in the organization.

Additionally, Slido interviewed 5 experts, each with a different perspective on meetings and the meeting revolution. They were:

Bruce Daisley

— bestselling author, consultant and ex-Twitter VP EMEA

Katie Guzman

— Product Management Lead for Growth and Adoption at Asana

Leanne Hughes

— international facilitator and host of the First Time Facilitator podcast

Bill Macaitis

— Growth advisor, former CMO at Zendesk & Slack, former SVP at Salesforce

Jeetu Patel

— SVP and General Manager, Security and Collaboration, Cisco

The report was also informed by desk research and in-depth interviews with Slido customers.

Our gratitude goes to all who contributed and shared their much valued insight.

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