

Take your meetings outdoors

“Walking is good for solving problems, it’s like the feet are little psychiatrists” - Pepper Giardino

Many people assume that serious conversations must take place within the confines of four walls. In reality, the most creative moments take place outside them. Call a walking meeting and you’ll get a change of scenery, boost your energy, get some fresh air and burn a few calories too.

Why have a walking meeting?

Give yourself a break from being bleary eyed in meeting rooms and take your meeting outside. Walking meetings offer:

- A chance to fit some physical activity into your day
- Different environments to inspire new ideas
- A chance to get some fresh air and natural light
- A shift in group dynamics
- Improve the group’s physical and mental well-being
- An opportunity to re-energize

What should you bear in mind?

You’ll quickly work out what types of people and meetings can go walkabout, but if you are a bit unsure, arrange to meet for coffee, suggest getting your drinks ‘to go’ and take it from there so everyone feels comfortable. Here’s a checklist for things to consider for successful walking meeting:

Numbers. For interactive meetings, we suggest you limit numbers to no more than 6 people. This will enable everyone to have a chance to hear and participate.

Agenda. Set an agenda beforehand and inform everyone of the discussion topics so they can arrive prepared.

Noise. Consider the environment you’ll be walking in--choose routes along quiet streets or in a nearby green space. Avoid busy roads that might make it challenging for everyone to hear.

Pace. Make sure the walking pace is comfortable for everyone.

Clothing. Give advance notice for walking meetings so that participants can bring appropriate shoes. Have some extra umbrellas available if rain is in the forecast.

Involvement. Make sure you talk to everyone. Try walking 2-3 abreast and make sure everyone can hear what is being discussed.

Capturing actions. Assign someone to scribe and take along a small notepad to jot down any actions. Be sure to recap and identify next steps and circulate these after your walking meeting.

Evaluate. After the first few walking meetings, it might be a good idea to ask participants for feedback on what can be improved for your next walking meeting.

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