

QuickTip – Standard Parking Lot

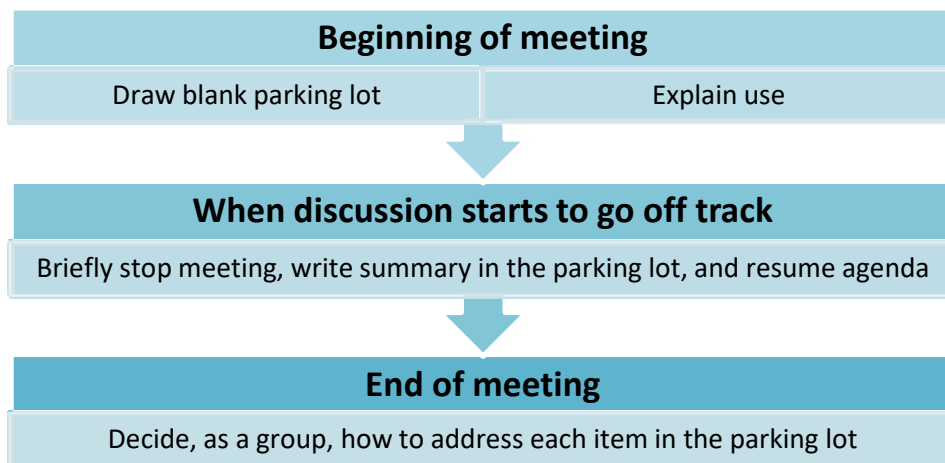
The parking lot technique helps a facilitator deal with tangential issues that threaten to take a meeting off track.

When to Use

Use the parking lot when someone raises a point that is off-topic or in too much detail.

Procedure

Acknowledge the point the person is making (people get upset if they think they have not been heard) and then suggest deferring discussion of it by putting it in a parking lot. Assure participants that items in the parking lot won't get lost. You will come back to them at the appropriate time, whether that is at the end of the meeting or in a follow-up.



Considerations

1. This method keeps the meeting focused on primary topics while ensuring that relevant side topics won't get lost.
2. It's best if the items in the parking lot are visible, such as notes on a whiteboard or on-screen document, so everyone is aware that they will not be lost and can easily refer back to them.
3. Refer to the QuickTip on the Advanced Parking Lot technique for a variation that helps the group classify ideas in the parking lot for further action.