

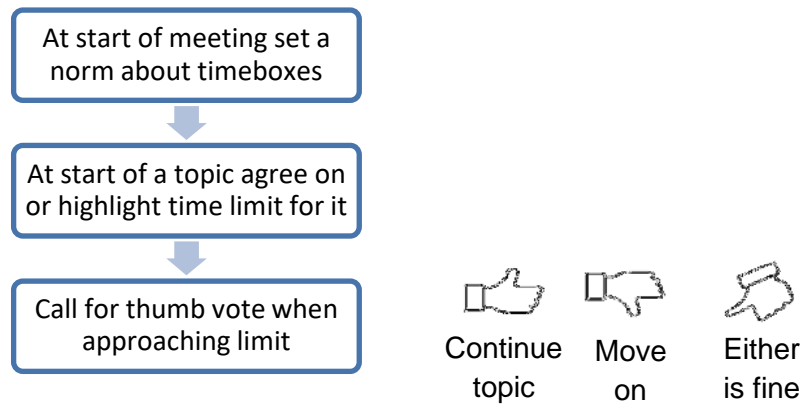
QuickTip – Timeboxing

Timeboxing is a good meeting practice that helps prevent a topic from taking too much time during a meeting. A timebox is a time limit on a topic that participants agree to when discussion starts. When the time limit gets close, the facilitator calls attention to it and helps participants decide whether they want to keep the discussion going or move to the next topic.

When to Use

- Always set timeboxes when you create an agenda. The timebox for every topic should be clearly visible on the agenda.
- You can also use timeboxing on the fly during a meeting. When you run into a topic that you think is likely to run long, stop the discussion and set a timebox with the group’s help.

Procedure



Considerations

1. Timeboxing works best when participants agree ahead of time that they will use it. This avoids surprises when the facilitator has to interrupt a vigorous discussion. Therefore, it is good practice to discuss timeboxing when setting up meeting norms.
2. Timeboxing can be used “on the fly” but it is most powerful when it is used together with a good agenda. The timeboxes for each topic on the agenda set an implicit agreement among the participants about how they expect to spend their time during the meeting. This makes it easier to have a constructive discussion about what to do when approaching the time limit.
3. By asking participants whether to move on, you’re getting them involved in managing the meeting. That helps them buy in to the decision. Make sure you get everyone’s opinion, such as by using the thumb voting method shown above. This applies some peer pressure to move forward when just one or two vocal people are dragging out the topic, while allowing further discussion if most people agree that more time is needed.

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