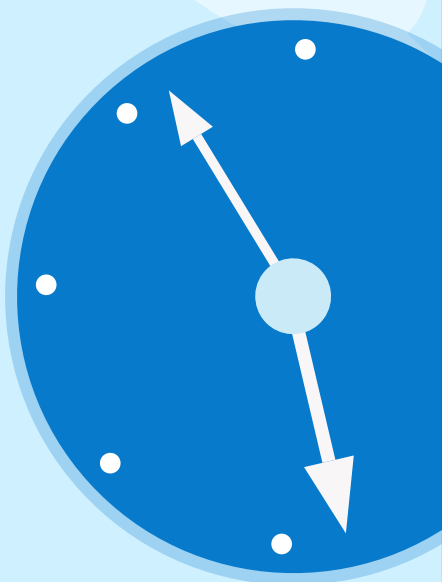


# 5 Time-Wasting Meetings and How to Keep Them Off Your Calendar



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# 5 Time-Wasting Meetings and How to Keep Them Off Your Calendar

## 5 TIME-WASTING MEETINGS

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If you spend a lot of your workday dealing with constant interruptions and repeating information for what feels like the millionth time, you're not alone.

It might seem like you're destined to be trapped in meetings for the rest of your life, but the good news is there are strategies and tools available to help you reclaim your time and sanity at work.

In this guide, we'll delve into five common types of meetings that make moving work forward harder than it needs to be, why they happen, and most importantly, practical ways to keep them off your calendar. We'll even share tips and tricks that work for us here at TechSmith.

Small changes can have a ripple effect across teams and projects. Adopting these approaches will not only improve your communication skills but help build a more efficient and collaborative environment at your workplace.

01



## The metrics update that became a data dump

You're in a meeting. A colleague is supposed to be sharing an update on how your latest marketing campaign is performing. They launch into a rapid-fire presentation, reading slide after slide and the whole thing quickly becomes a whirlwind of charts, graphs, and random numbers.

You leave feeling overwhelmed, and unable to grasp the key takeaways or implications of the data. You may have even tuned out and started working on another task while they droned on and on. Sound familiar?



### Why it's a waste of time

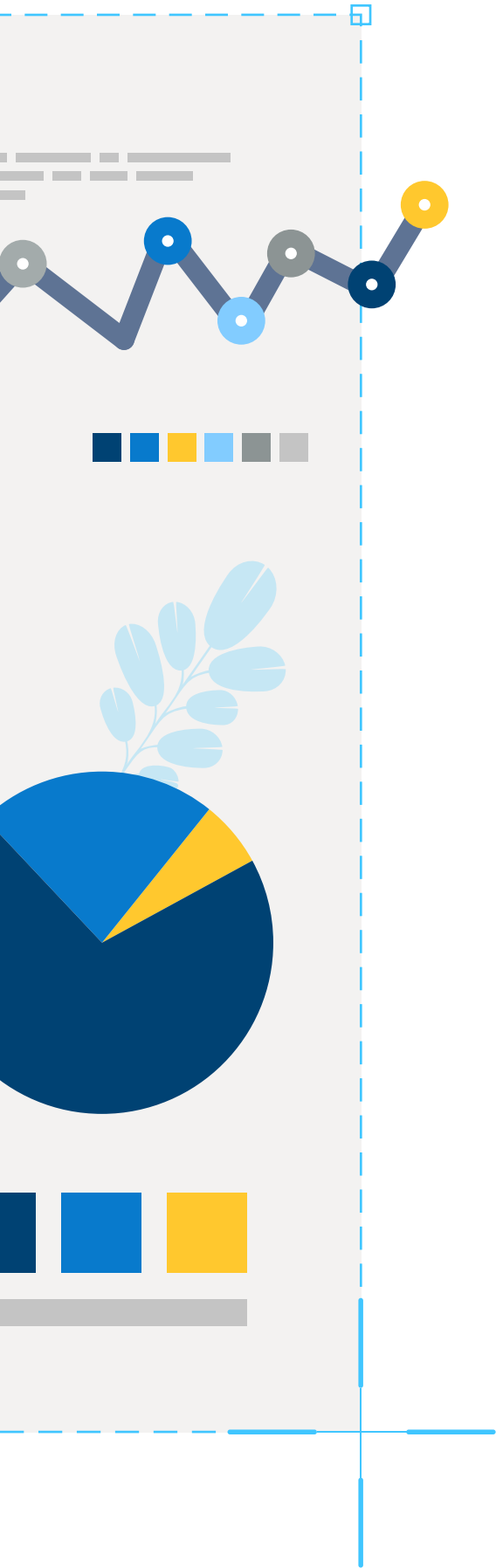
Meetings like this often feel like they're not a good use of time, but they can also negatively impact business outcomes.

If a valuable insight is missed because it wasn't communicated effectively, your organization could miss opportunities for improvement, innovation, and growth. Or worse, someone could misinterpret the data and use that information to make critical business decisions.

### How to fix it

Asynchronous video is a game-changer when sharing data because it condenses what could have been an unproductive, lengthy meeting into a few focused minutes.

If you've never created a video, there's no reason to be intimidated. User-friendly screen capture and recording tools like [Snagit](#) make it incredibly simple to create a professional-quality video in a few clicks.



STEP 1

## Get organized

Presenting data in a way that's easy for others to understand is nearly impossible if you haven't taken the time to prepare.

Before you even consider hitting record, collect and analyze your data, then identify only a few key insights or recommendations you want to make.

While you may have a lot you want to share, keeping your message concise prevents information overload and helps stakeholders absorb your recommendations and understand what needs immediate action.



STEP 2

## Take a few screenshots

It might be tempting to bust out PowerPoint to get your presentation started, but here's the thing: a few screenshots will do the trick. The dashboards you're pulling data from already tell that story.

Simply use a screen capture tool like Snagit to grab screenshots of the charts, graphs, and data points you want to share. No need to waste precious time formatting slides.



STEP 3

## Add context and clarity

Context is crucial for understanding data. Once you've captured your screenshots, use annotations like arrows or highlights to help your audience easily grasp the important details. Add contextual information directly to your image with text or callouts.

If there's a data point you want to share but also some customer information or something else you don't want out in the world, don't fret. With a tool like Snagit, it's super simple to select bits of information within your screenshot and blur or magically remove them.



STEP 4

## Record a quick video

By quick, we mean *quick*. The goal is not to replace a 30-minute meeting with a 30-minute video. Your best bet is to keep any message you send around three minutes in length.

We mentioned Snagit before, and we'll let you in on a secret—it has a game-changing feature that allows you to effortlessly transform a series of screenshots into a video.

Simply select your annotated screenshots, hit record, and talk through the data as you click through the images like slides in a presentation.

Remember, not everyone is as familiar with the information as you are, so it's helpful to start your video with a bit of context. Then, explain why the data points you captured are significant and how they tie into your project's objectives.

Finally, include any insights or noteworthy trends, and make specific recommendations based on the data.



STEP 5

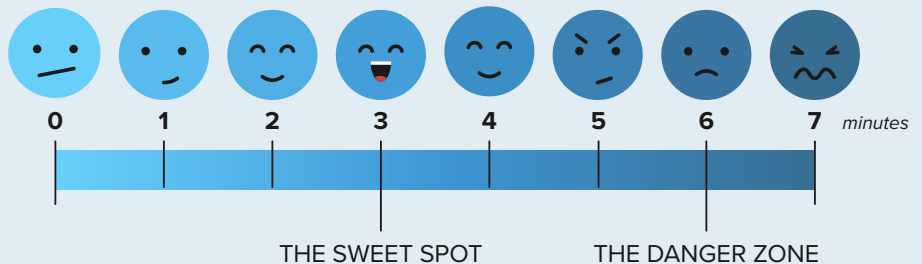
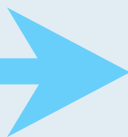
## Share your video

Trying to attach a video to an email is so last decade. Instead, share your video in a way that allows everyone to easily access it and even respond with comments or reactions.

Don't forget to include a brief summary when you share the link, and let stakeholders know to follow up with any questions in the comments.

At TechSmith we share all of our video messages with Screencast. If you're using Snagit, you can get a unique link to your video in a single click, where viewers can leave time-stamped comments, annotations, and reactions.

**HOW LONG SHOULD MY VIDEO BE?**



The screenshot shows a video player interface. The video content is a presentation titled "Metrics Update" by Robert Williams. It features two main sections: "UPLOAD STATS" and "CHART".

Category	Value
Category 1	75%
Category 2	62%
Category 3	45%
Category 4	75%

The "CHART" section shows a line graph with data points for February, March, April, May, June, and July. The graph has three data series in yellow, blue, and grey.

Below the video are controls: "Edit Details", "Share to Collection", "Share", and "More".

Overlaid on the right is a comment thread with three comments:

- Monica Lewis:** Looks like we hit our marks everyone! Congrats on a successful quarter. (Replies: 1, Likes: 1)
- Susan Hall:** Wow! I couldn't be more proud of this team. (Replies: 1, Likes: 1)
- Robert Williams:** Thanks to all! Let's gear up for next quarter! (Replies: 1, Likes: 1)



## The benefits of sharing data with video

Asynchronous video messages empower your team and stakeholders to make more thoughtful, data-driven decisions based on your insights.

When you're presenting information live, it's really easy to skip past important details or forget to mention something, but when you record a video, you can take the time to make sure you have all the information put together in a clear, concise way. Plus, stakeholders can take in the information at their own pace and re-watch portions of your video if they need to.

This approach not only saves everyone from yet another meeting on their calendar, it prevents the scenario where someone misses out on critical information because of a scheduling conflict. For teams working across various time zones, video is an incredible tool for sharing information.

02 🙄

# The project demo that turned into stakeholder roulette

Project demos are a critical opportunity for teams to share progress, achievements, and potential impacts of their work with stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the unpredictable nature of a live meeting makes the effectiveness of project demos a bit of a gamble. Something we like to call “stakeholder roulette.”

Let’s say your team has been working tirelessly on a project and is excited to present that work. Halfway through the presentation, there’s a technical issue, and you end up rushing through the rest of the information. Then, you realize a key stakeholder got pulled into another meeting last minute.

You miss out on the valuable feedback you were hoping for, and participants leave without clearly understanding the project’s details.



## Why it’s a waste of time

Key stakeholders within a company often have a lot of responsibilities and commitments, making it nearly impossible to find a time on the calendar that works for everyone. Coordinating attendance can be especially difficult if participants are in different time zones or physical locations.

The absence of key stakeholders and project contributors leads to misunderstandings, decision-making delays, and missed opportunities to improve.

## How to fix it

Effortlessly connect with stakeholders by skipping the meeting and embracing asynchronous video presentations in place of live demos. It ensures everyone’s input is captured, and collaboration isn’t hindered by scheduling constraints.



### STEP 1

## Set expectations for the demo

As your project nears a milestone where you would typically get everyone together for a demo, give your team instructions for recording a video demo instead.

As the “demo wrangler,” you’ll want to give contributors a basic structure to follow, where to upload their video, and a deadline.

We utilize Screencast Collections for our own asynchronous group project demos at TechSmith. It provides a central location for uploads and allows stakeholders to leave feedback and ask questions in the comments.



### STEP 2

## Record your video

A screen recording tool like Snagit is the best way to record a project demo because you can quickly capture your screen and camera video at the same time or switch between the two as you present your project.

Start out your recording by refreshing stakeholders about the context of your project, including the customer problem your work is trying to solve. Then show off your hard work, presenting how key features of your solution work on screen.

Conclude your demo video by asking stakeholders for input. Be clear about the specific type of feedback you’re looking for.



### STEP 3

## Share with stakeholders

Once all demo videos are organized into a collection, it’s time to share the link with stakeholders. Whether you’re sending an email or a chat message, don’t forget to briefly remind everyone of the demo’s purpose.

Then, encourage stakeholders to actively engage with the content by inviting them to leave questions and feedback in the comments. Don’t forget to set a clear deadline for providing feedback.

## HOW TO STRUCTURE SUCCESSFUL PROJECT DEMO VIDEOS

1

### OPEN WITH THE CONTEXT

Refresh stakeholders about the customer problem your work is trying to solve and other important context.

2

### DEMO THE WORK

Show off that cool feature you created or the solution you found.

3

### ASK FOR INPUT

Guide stakeholders toward the specific type of input that will be helpful to you.



## The benefits of asynchronous project demos

The flexibility of using video to deliver project demos accommodates diverse schedules and time zones, ensuring you can collect structured feedback from all important parties.

Plus, as a presenter, you can go in completely prepared. No need to worry about technical issues or forgetting important details on the spot.

The asynchronous approach also creates a valuable archive of project progress that team members can revisit for reference and future decision-making as needed.



# The “How do I...?” that derailed your day

Imagine you’re in the middle of an important task, completely focused when you hear that familiar ping of an incoming chat or email. It’s a colleague who frequently asks for your help with technical tasks, asking if you have a second to show them something.

You stop what you’re doing and either walk over to their desk, or fire up a virtual meeting room to guide them through the steps. You want to be helpful, but you’re positive you’ve shown them this process before and now you’re frustrated you won’t have time to complete the work you were doing before.

### Why it’s a waste of time

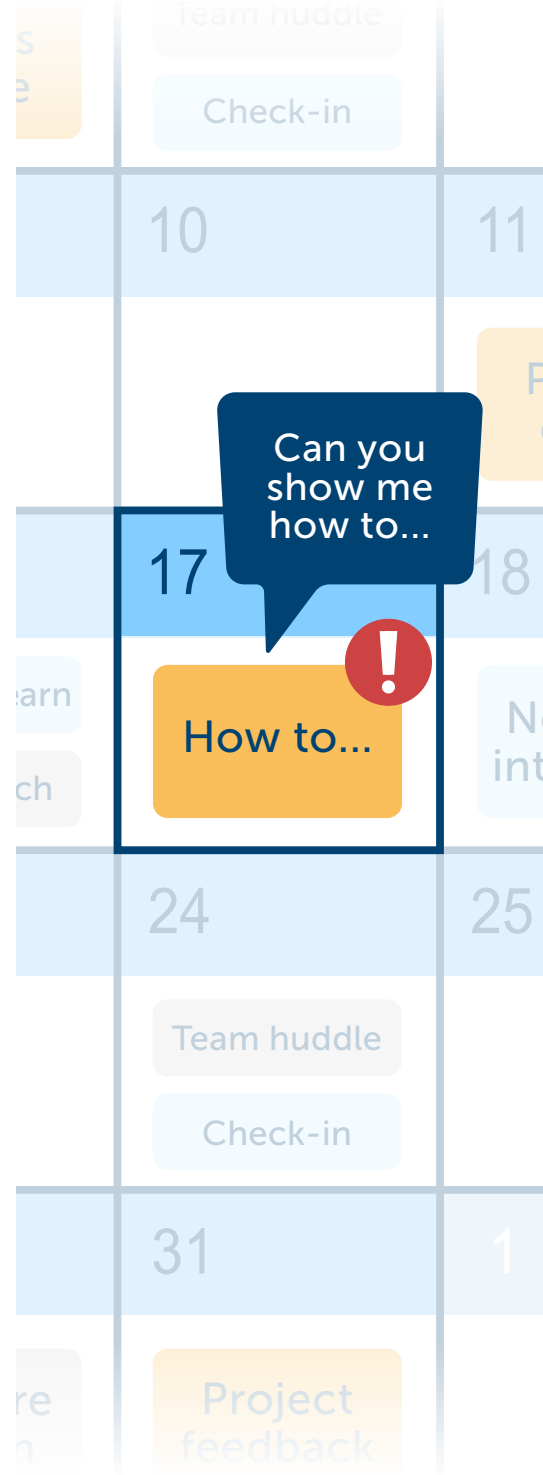
Constant interruptions can cause you to lose focus and momentum, especially for tasks that require more concentration.

When you’re being asked the same questions on repeat, this type of informal training can end up wasting a lot of time and make you less productive overall.

But it’s also not a great situation for the person who needs help. Had you been in a meeting or out of the office when that person reached out, they would have had to wait for that answer, preventing them from moving forward with their work.

### How to fix it

When you need to show someone how to tackle a task, instead of creating a meeting invite, capture the process with a series of screenshots or a screen recording.



## SHOW THEM HOW WITH VIDEO

A screen recording is like the remote work equivalent of watching over a colleague's shoulder while they teach you how to complete a task. For more complicated tasks that would require a lot of screenshots to cover, a quick video is often a good alternative.

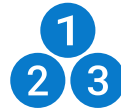
With a screen capture tool like Snagit, you can narrate the process and draw on your screen while you record.



STEP 1

## Take a few screenshots

Think about your screenshots as snapshots of a moment in the task. Break the process you want to demonstrate into manageable steps so that each image corresponds to a specific action or instruction.



STEP 2

## Organize and add context

Using a more advanced screen capture tool like Snagit instead of your computer's native app can save you a lot of time on this step. With Snagit's built-in editor, you can quickly add visual cues like step numbers or callouts to add visual cues to your screenshots.

Snagit even comes with professional-quality drag-and-drop templates that help you organize your screenshots in a way that's easy to understand. No need for design skills or hours spent formatting.



STEP 3

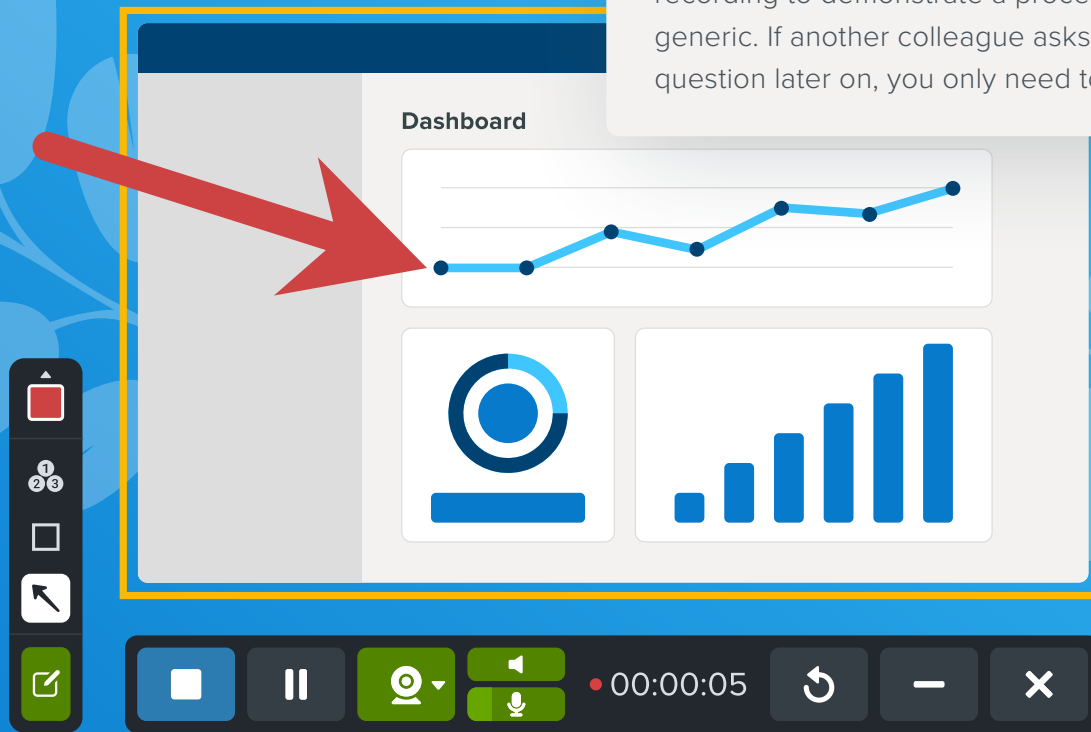
## Share your guide

Once your how-to guide is ready, share it with your colleague. You can send it via Microsoft Teams or Slack or upload it to a shared drive directly from the Snagit editor.

At TechSmith, we add how-to's for common questions to Screencast Collections so our teammates have easy access to the information when they need it.

## PRO TIP

When creating how-to guides or a screen recording to demonstrate a process, keep it generic. If another colleague asks you the same question later on, you only need to re-send it.



## The benefits of documenting processes with screenshots

Screenshots and how-to guides offer a reliable reference that eliminate the need for unnecessary meetings and interruptions throughout your workday.

Rather than coordinating schedules and dedicating a specific time slot for a meeting, your coworkers can access the guide whenever it's convenient for them and absorb the information at their own speed.

These guides can be easily shared with a wider audience, making them ideal for onboarding new team members or handing off tasks when you'll be out of the office.

# 04

## The feedback request that turned into a free-for-all

Have you ever sent out a polite request for quick feedback on something, only for it to turn into absolute chaos?

Some of your colleagues respond via email with lengthy paragraphs, another sends you a meeting invite to discuss their thoughts, and several others leave vague comments in an unrelated chat thread.

Some of the feedback is conflicting, and as you're bouncing between your inbox, calendar, and chat platform, you're struggling to make sense of what improvements you need to make.

### Why it's a waste of time

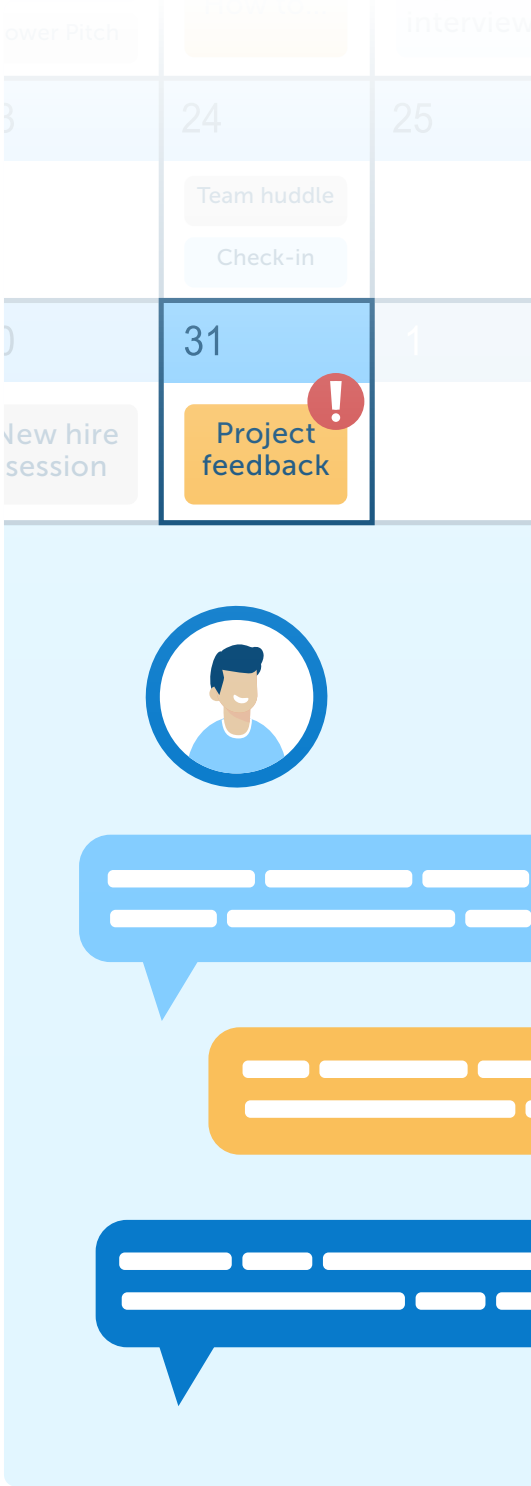
Unstructured and scattered feedback like this can have consequences that create a lot of unnecessary back and forth, affecting team dynamics, project times and your overall capacity to get stuff done.

All the time you spend managing and consolidating the feedback takes away from the time you could be focusing on making improvements to that project, ultimately slowing the project down or having a negative impact on the results.

And when feedback is provided through multiple channels, it's challenging to resolve conflicting input or get clarification on specific points.

### How to fix it

Using video and asynchronous conversation platforms can help you centralize and streamline the feedback process.





### STEP 1

## Show your deliverable as clearly as possible

A lot of the work we do lives within our computer screens, so a screen recording tool like Snagit makes creating video for a feedback request extremely simple.

Let's say you're looking for feedback on a new website design. You could try to describe the specific elements you're referring to and hope it makes sense, but it's much easier to show stakeholders instead.

With Snagit, you can even draw on your screen as you're recording so you can highlight the specific feedback areas as you record.



### STEP 2

## Make the ask clear

In your video message, be specific about the types of feedback you're looking for and the types of feedback you're not looking for to help keep responses focused. And don't forget to set a deadline!



### STEP 3

## Channel the feedback to one place

When you share your video message, make sure it's clear where you want stakeholders to leave their feedback.

At TechSmith, we use Screencast Conversations so that feedback is tied to the question. The ability to leave time-stamped comments adds so much clarity to the conversation because we know exactly what part of the video someone is responding to.

## 6 SIGNS OF MEETING FATIGUE

Meeting fatigue is that feeling of exhaustion and burnout you get from attending in-person and virtual meetings for extended periods of time. Here are a few common symptoms of meeting fatigue that people can experience:

- 1 Feeling tired and drained or physically fatigued
- 2 Forgetfulness or trouble concentrating
- 3 Difficulty maintaining relationships and being present
- 4 Irritability of restlessness
- 5 A decline in productivity
- 6 Physical symptoms like aches

## THE THREE D'S OF FEEDBACK



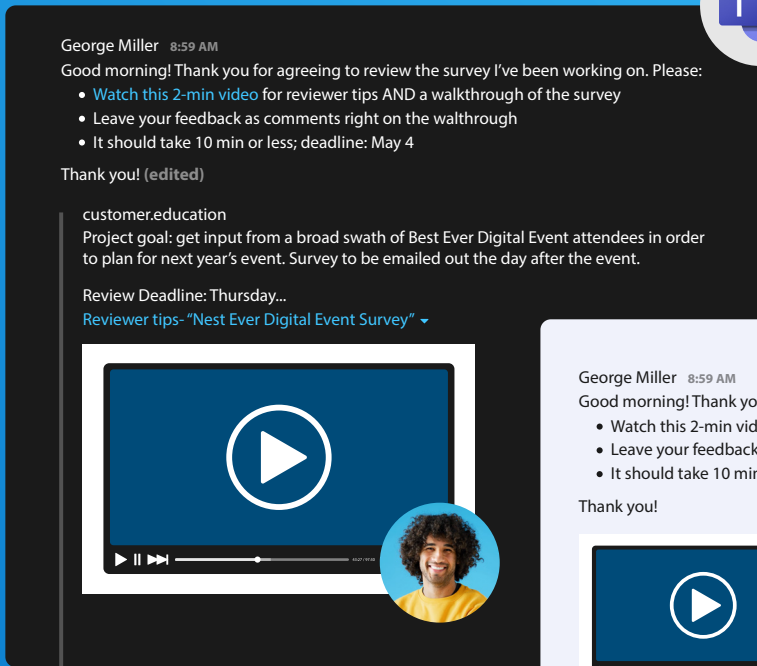
DO NEED



DON'T NEED



DEADLINE



George Miller 8:59 AM

Good morning! Thank you for agreeing to review the survey I've been working on. Please:

- Watch this 2-min video for reviewer tips AND a walkthrough of the survey
- Leave your feedback as comments right on the walkthrough
- It should take 10 min or less; deadline: May 4

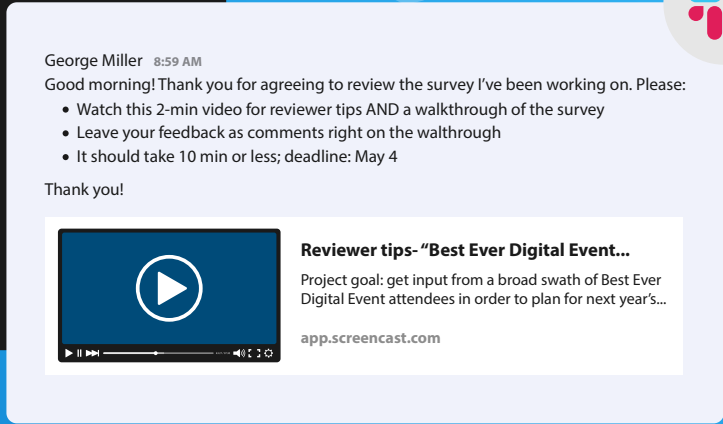
Thank you! (edited)

customer.education

Project goal: get input from a broad swath of Best Ever Digital Event attendees in order to plan for next year's event. Survey to be emailed out the day after the event.

Review Deadline: Thursday...

Reviewer tips- "Nest Ever Digital Event Survey" ▾



George Miller 8:59 AM

Good morning! Thank you for agreeing to review the survey I've been working on. Please:

- Watch this 2-min video for reviewer tips AND a walkthrough of the survey
- Leave your feedback as comments right on the walkthrough
- It should take 10 min or less; deadline: May 4

Thank you!

Reviewer tips- "Best Ever Digital Event..."

Project goal: get input from a broad swath of Best Ever Digital Event attendees in order to plan for next year's...

app.screencast.com



## The benefits of using video and asynchronous conversation platforms to collect feedback

Recording a video message to ask for feedback is beneficial because a lot of projects and concepts are best explained visually.

With a screen recording, you can convey the context of a project so everyone has a clear understanding of the nuances before they offer up feedback. Plus, when you can also include your camera video, recipients can read your facial expressions and tone of voice, adding so much more clarity than any email could on its own.

Sharing your video where everyone has an opportunity to respond with comments or reactions, allows for better collaboration. Stakeholders can build off of each other's responses and any conflicting advice is easier to resolve.



# 05

## The mystery meeting with no context

Have you ever received a meeting invite for a topic that seems vaguely familiar, but there's no agenda at all?

With little context or direction for how to prepare, chances are that meeting doesn't end up being the most productive or collaborative session on your calendar.

Or worse, so much of the meeting is spent getting the group up to speed on the topic that by the time you get to the discussion everyone has to bounce to their next meeting.

### Why it's a waste of time

Let's face it, adding an agenda to your meeting invite is just another task on your never-ending to-do list. When we're crunched for time, it's easy to skip over the details of an invite, assuming everyone invited is already familiar enough with the topic.

However, meetings without clear agendas can easily devolve into aimless discussions, with participants veering off-topic and introducing unrelated issues and wasting the time you were trying to save by skipping that agenda.

Even if the conversation does stay on track, participants might not have the necessary information, data, or insights to contribute meaningfully to the discussion. This can lead to an overall lack of substance in the conversation, and potentially critical opportunities or solutions might get overlooked.

### How to fix it

A quick video message is a simple way to share the topics you'd like to cover and important background information with participants up front.



	5	6
	Brainstorm	
	Power Pitch	
	12	13
	19	20
s	Mystery meeting	
	26	27
	Brainstorm	



### STEP 1

## Outline the topics you want to discuss

Once you hit record, go through each topic you'd like to discuss in the meeting, reminding participants why those topics are important and how they relate to your goals.



### STEP 2

## Provide helpful background information

We typically spend a lot of time at the beginning of meetings getting everyone in the room or Zoom up to speed on what we're talking about.

The beauty of video messages is you can get all of that one-way sharing out of the way. Your team will be grateful for that extra time to absorb the information without feeling put on the spot during the live discussion.



### STEP 3

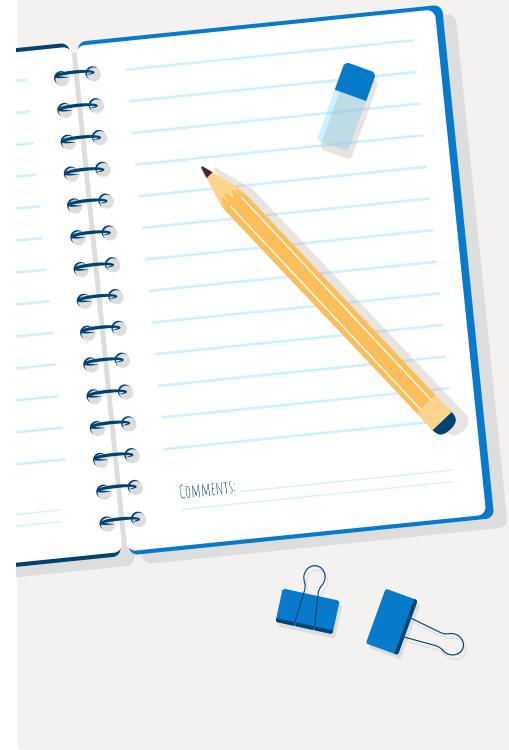
## Add the link to your video in the meeting invite

Video files are often too large for email, but if you recorded your video in Snagit, you can generate a link to your video in a single click.

Simply paste the video link and provide clear instructions for participants to watch the video before the meeting.

NO AGENDA?  
NO THANK YOU.

When you receive a meeting invite without context, it's ok to ask the sender for more information so you can identify if the meeting will be valuable to you or not.



### TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR NOTIFICATIONS

Most of us spend a lot of our workdays bouncing around between different tools, tasks, and resources to the point where we no longer have time to focus on our work.

1. **Get rid of unnecessary notifications.** Do you really need all of the notifications your phone and desktop send you? Probably not.
2. **Take advantage of "Do not disturb" mode.** If completely silencing notifications makes you a bit nervous, try silencing them for a couple hours of focused work.
3. **Plan time to check notifications.** This approach reduces the immediate distraction caused by a notification because you know you have a dedicated block of time set aside to check them.



## The benefits of including a pre-watch video in your meeting invites

By sharing essential information through a quick video message in your invite, the actual meeting time can be optimized for deeper discussions, decision-making, and brainstorming.

Since everyone is already briefed on the content, you can minimize confusion and tangents, because participants can come prepared with thoughtful questions, suggestions, and contributions.

At TechSmith, we've found this approach accommodates the different learning and work preferences on our teams, and helps prevent that scenario where only a few voices dominate the conversation while others are still collecting their thoughts.

# Make a big impact— one small step at a time

All too often we find ourselves grappling with these unnecessary meetings that disrupt our day, drain our time, and leave us feeling frustrated.

Transforming communication in your workplace might seem like a daunting task, but it's the small actions that often bring the most significant change. Start by implementing just one of the approaches discussed and you'll quickly see the impact.

Whether it's sending a pre-watch video, creating a visual-how-to guide, or using video to demo your work, taking that initial step can inspire others to join you on the path to better workplace communication.



**Screen capture tools like Snagit give you the ability to capture and share knowledge, insight, and information in a way that's easy to understand. Add the power of asynchronous collaboration with Screencast and you'll move work forward faster than ever.**

[\*\*Try Snagit + Screencast for Free\*\*](#)



## TechSmith®

TechSmith is the market leader in screen capture software and productivity solutions for daily in-person, remote or hybrid workplace communication and customer-facing image and video content. The company's award-winning flagship products, [Snagit](#) and [Camtasia](#), empower anyone to create remarkable videos and images that share knowledge for better training, tutorials, and everyday communication.



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**Show What You Know**

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