

How to use behavioural science and social psychology to transform your meetings

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Meetings are the cornerstone of business collaboration and a fundamental component of professional life, forming the ecosystem where new ideas are born and critical decisions are made.



The Meetings Company founder, Mark Kayser

Yet, they are also notorious for being inefficient and sometimes even counterproductive. This paradox begs the question: Why do we act the way we do in meetings?

Answers lie at the intersection of behavioural science and social psychology. To unlock the full potential of meetings, we must delve into the unseen and often unknown phenomena that influence group dynamics.

The psychology of meetings

Meetings are more than just exchanges of information; they are complex social interactions. Each participant brings their own set of experiences, biases, and behavioural patterns to the table.

Behavioural science helps us understand these patterns, while social psychology allows us to comprehend how group dynamics can both hinder and enhance the collaborative process.

Understanding individual behaviours

People's actions in meetings are often driven by subconscious motivations. Behavioural science teaches us that factors such as - the need for approval, the fear of conflict, or the desire for dominance - can shape behaviours in subtle but significant ways.

For instance, someone might agree with a point not because they believe it's the best course of action, but because they

seek the approval of their peers or superiors.

Deciphering group dynamics

Similarly, social psychology provides insights into group behaviour. Phenomena like groupthink can stifle innovation and lead to poor decision-making. Conversely, a well-understood and managed group dynamic can foster creativity, critical thinking, and efficient decision-making.



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Priming for success

To conduct effective meetings, one should prime attendees with an understanding of their own preferences and the group's dynamic.

- **Preparation:** Distributing pre-meeting materials that not only outline the agenda but also provide context on the attendees' roles and what is expected from them.

- **Facilitation:** Having a skilled facilitator who can navigate the group dynamic, ensuring that all voices are heard and that the meeting stays on track.
- **Feedback:** Collecting and sharing feedback post-meeting to reinforce positive behaviours and address areas that need improvement.

A people-centric approach

By adopting a people-centric approach that aligns everyone to the best permutation for the session, we can reduce friction and achieve better outcomes, faster. This means considering the personalities, communication styles, decision-making processes and 'red flags' of each participant.

The impact of understanding

When attendees understand not only the content but also the context of the meeting, including the behaviours at play, they are more engaged and prepared to contribute constructively. This understanding is the key to unlocking a meeting's potential without the frustrations that often accompany group endeavours.

Conclusion

Meetings don't have to be a source of frustration. By applying principles from behavioural science and social psychology, we can transform them into more productive, engaging, and even enjoyable gatherings.

It starts with understanding the hidden influences at play and ends with an aligned group taking collective strides towards a common purpose, achieved with less effort and more satisfaction.

For a free assessment, visit www.MeetApp.ai to find out your meeting type.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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