

Staying on Topic

It's Easy to Stray!

Written by Myriam Laberge, July 2010

Do you distinguish between different meeting purposes? If not, you may find that your "quick", regular information/status meetings are getting hijacked into problem-solving meetings. How can you stay true to the meeting purpose a emergent issues arise?

Whether your team holds regular progress meetings through 15-minute standing check-ins, online/web meetings, or regular in-person huddles, you likely have struggled with the meeting digressing from status reporting to issue resolution. Resist dealing with an issue as it surfaces! Otherwise, you will waste the time of those for whom the issue is not relevant, and erode the time available for others to give their progress reports.

TIP: Here's how to stay on topic. Park any issues as they are flagged. At the end of the scheduled status meeting, quickly establish who needs to discuss each issue on the Parking Lot. Either task who will schedule the appropriate next meeting(s), or, after you've adjourned the original progress report meeting, continue with relevant participants.