

# 10 ways to replace ineffective meetings with Slack

These flexible alternatives free up valuable time for you and your teams



 slack

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# Introduction

Whether it's at a coffee shop, a cabin in the woods or the office, where we work matters: **78% of knowledge workers** want to be able to work from wherever they're most productive.

But did you know that 95% of knowledge workers want flexibility in *when* they work?

Meetings are often the figurative ball and chain that dictate schedules. Even worse, a lot of these meetings aren't that productive or efficient. A new survey found that employees spend an average of **18 hours a week in meetings**.<sup>1</sup> They say "no" to only 14% of invites even though they'd prefer to decline 31%, and those who do attend report multitasking 70% of the time. So it's not surprising that begrudgingly going to meetings wastes \$25,000 annually per employee—netting out to \$101 million a year for organizations with 5,000 or more employees.

To **enable real flexibility**, companies must adopt a digital-first mindset, recognizing that the only way to give people the freedom and autonomy they need is to leverage digital tools that allow them more choice—in both when and how they work.

It's also important to recognize the signs of the times and the need to do more with less by boosting productivity and finding efficiency gains. Slack enables you to do this with features that promote flexibility, drive productivity and give you time back to focus on value work that propels the business forward and creates results.

Of course, sometimes you just need a meeting. These days you must ask yourself and your teams to be honest about when meetings are **truly necessary**. When they are, only hold meetings that are **intentional and well-planned**, with a clear agenda, goals and input.

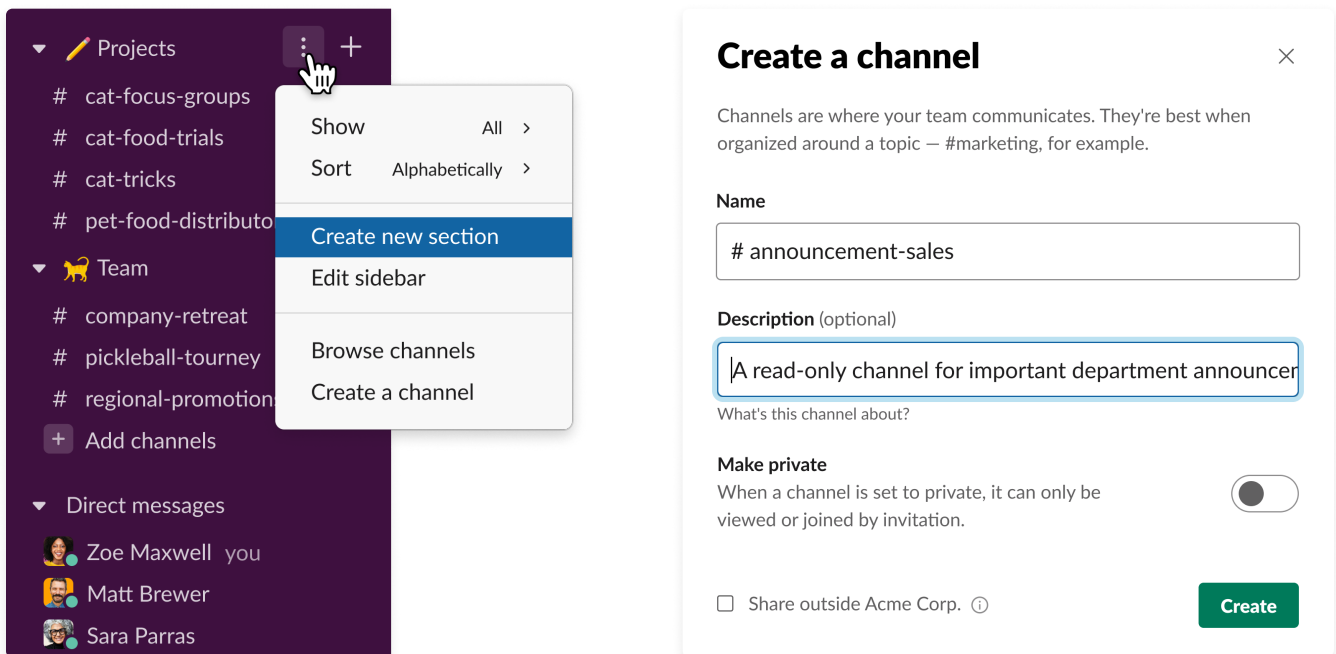
To that end, we're here to share how Slack can help you **replace inefficient meetings** with **flexible alternatives** through platform features such as channels, workflows, huddles and clips.

<sup>1</sup> Bloomberg, Steven Rogelberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-26/are-meetings-a-waste-of-time-pointless-plans-cost-big-companies-100m?srd=premium>



# Replace meetings with channels

**Slack channels** are the workhorse of a meeting-savvy culture. They're virtual spaces to share messages, workplace automations, digital tools and files, and can be created for any project, topic or team. Slack channels are a better way to work, especially in a **digital HQ**. Channels can enable 13% shorter sales cycles, 23% faster time to market for engineering, and 16% quicker execution for marketing teams.<sup>2</sup> On top of that, human resources departments can get employees up to full productivity in 24% less time.



## 1. Centralize your operations

Let's say you're a sales manager and it's the last month of the quarter. Instead of slogging through one-hour deal status meetings every week, try organizing all your team members and cross-functional partners in one channel per customer account. You can post a message in the channel asking for key updates, next steps and potential risks, encouraging the team to comment and provide updates in **threads**.

<sup>2</sup> IDC Research: Business Value of Slack Report, sampling 19 customers across the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia and the U.K.



## 2. Keep things moving across the globe

Maybe you're collaborating with your global counterparts in Europe. Instead of struggling through inconveniently timed meetings that straddle odd hours between time zones, you can leverage a **scheduled send**. Draft a message every day at 5 p.m. Eastern to post at 9 o'clock the next morning for your colleagues in London, noting key actions completed and listing agenda items for them to focus on to start their day. This saves everyone from a 30-minute meeting, and ensures that nothing slips through the cracks.

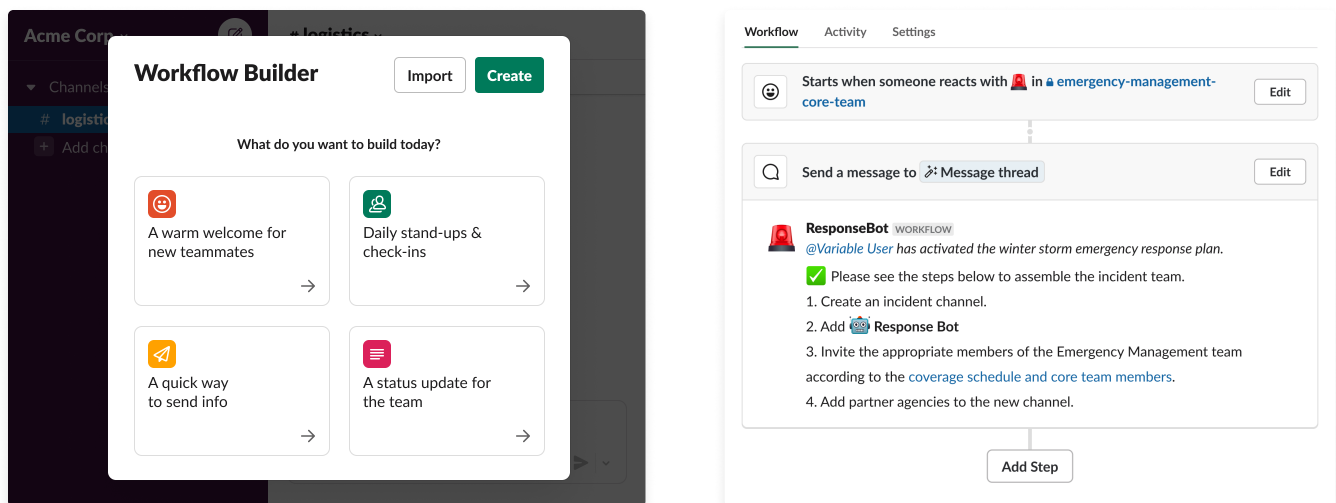
## 3. Increase visibility and align with external stakeholders

Working with external partners, clients and vendors can be challenging to coordinate. Another meeting-replacement tool is **Slack Connect**, which allows your teams to move all their conversations with external parties into Slack channels. For example, if you need to connect with a customer on their requirements, you can create a Slack Connect channel where everyone can seamlessly collaborate without missing a beat.



# Replace meetings with workflows

In the quest for fewer meetings, **Workflow Builder** is a key superpower. Anyone on Slack can automate processes through easy-to-set-up triggers and steps, no code required. These workflows run right in Slack channels and streamline important everyday tasks.



## 4. Get newcomers up to speed quickly

One great way to utilize workflows is to onboard new team members through welcome workflows in important channels. Rather than set up 1:1 meetings to get every single newcomer up to speed, your workflow can send a message to anyone new who joins the channel, complete with links to key resources, like your team's account plan and customer overview information.

## 5. Save time with asynchronous daily standups

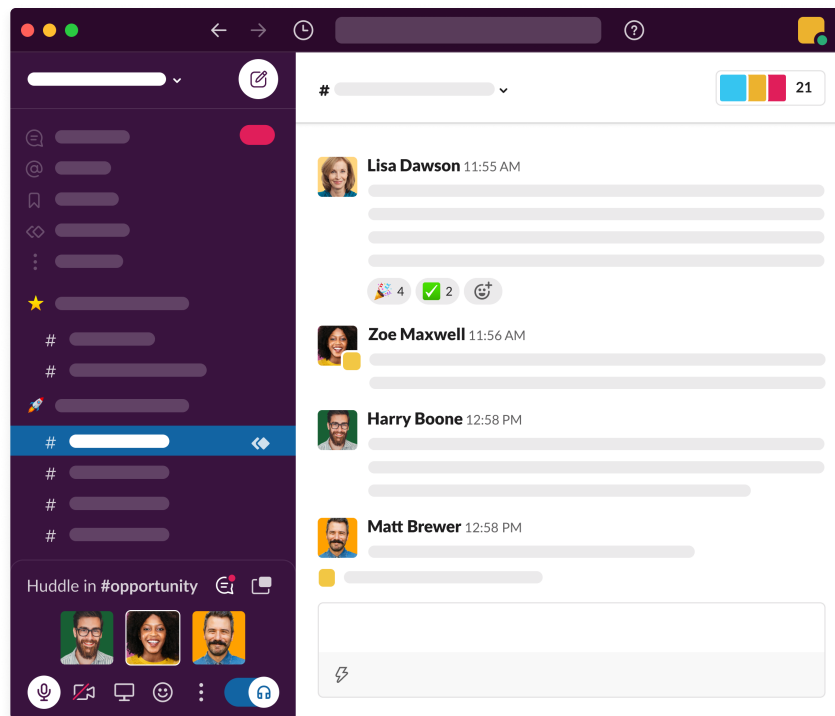
Daily meetings with your larger team can be critical to getting key projects or deals across the finish line, but they can quickly become an inflexible time suck. To maintain momentum, set up a daily standup workflow in Slack that reminds teams to share updates and blockers in thread. This asynchronous strategy keeps your team moving forward with complete transparency, without wasting precious time.



# Replace meetings with huddles

Though some of us can no longer swivel our chairs to ask teammates a question, the need to sync in real time still exists. **Huddles** in Slack provide a modern way to do this effective collaboration: With one click, you can open an audio connection in your channel, and whoever's available can hop in for a quick discussion.

All huddles start as audio-only conversations, but **new functionality** offers an immersive space for coworking. Now with lightweight video, multi-person screen-share capabilities and fun effects, teams can work alongside one another in huddles the same way they would in the office. Plus, conversations are saved in dedicated, searchable threads so anyone who joins can quickly get up to speed.



## 6. Quickly swarm and solve problems together

Huddles are ideal when you need to address an issue quickly with your team. Rather than waiting to set up a time that works for the entire team, with one click you can open up an audio or video connection in your project channel where your teammates can join for a quick problem-solving discussion. Additionally, any member of the channel can notice that the huddle is active, see who is in the huddle and jump in if they have additional insight.

*“If you need to have a conversation, you’re not going to schedule it with a calendar; you’re going to stay in Slack. With huddles, we can look at each other on video. We can thread the conversation. We can screen share at the same time as our colleagues. Huddles keep teams moving, with work in one place.”*

**Tamara Jensen**

Principal technical product manager, T-Mobile

## 7. Talk it out with an external stakeholder

Getting dedicated time with teammates is hard enough, and it gets even trickier when you need to meet with external partners, clients and vendors because you likely don’t have visibility into their calendars. With Slack, you can instantly ping anyone in your Slack Connect channel with your question or comment, and if they’re free to chat, you can have a quick huddle directly in that same channel. Everyone is kept in the loop with the post-huddle thread, where they can see who was able to join, how long the huddle lasted and any remaining action items.

## 8. Host office hours

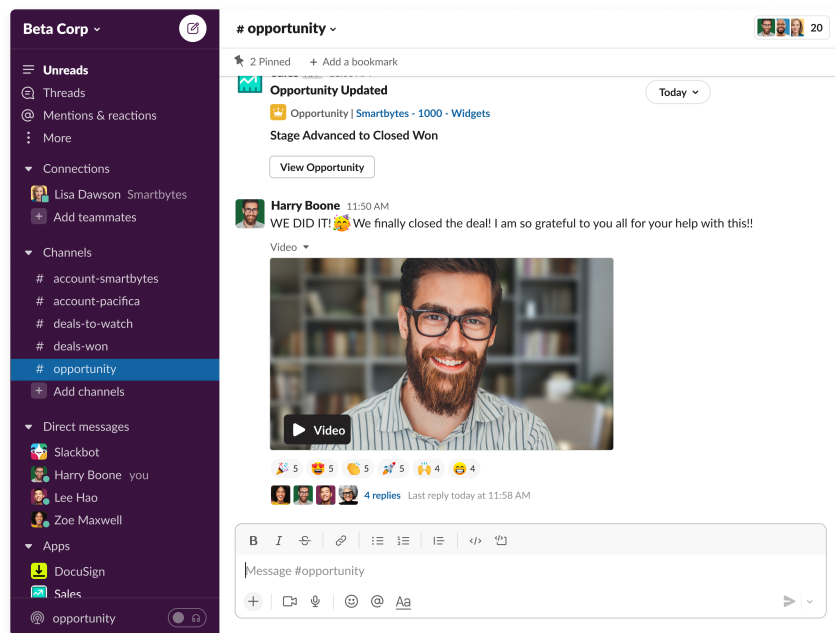
Another common use case for huddles is office hours. For example, rather than having a series of 1:1 conversations with sales reps during the lead-up to the end of the quarter, the legal team can set up office hours to support the reps as they get contracts updated. Simply announce office hours and open up a huddle in a designated Slack channel at the set time with relevant stakeholders. Because huddles don’t need scheduled participants or start and end times, anyone can see who’s in the huddle, jump in as needed and get their questions answered quickly, all while staying directly in Slack.





# Replace meetings with clips

**Clips** are a powerful way to share information asynchronously. These audio or video clips let users record natively in Slack and share directly in channel or as part of a thread.



## 9. Keep senior leaders in the loop

Say you want to give a final presentation to the executive team about the quarter's results. Getting time on executive calendars is always difficult, and you want to make the best use of it once you have everyone locked in. Instead of waiting for an opening on everyone's calendar to share your updates, you can use **clips**, which allow you to record and share your screen as you walk through the results. By sharing a short five-minute clip in advance, you can efficiently use your actual meeting time for an interactive dialogue and a more refined session.

## 10. Share results and success stories

After you've successfully closed a big deal, launched a campaign or wrapped up a high-impact project, spread the news far and wide. Instead of forcing your team to sit through another meeting, you can record a short clip recapping the project and any initial results, and then share it in the appropriate channel to get everyone up to speed.



# Continue to iterate and evolve in the modern workplace

Replacing unnecessary meetings and optimizing flexibility is not just a nice-to-have, but a crucial cost- and time-saver, enabling teams of all sizes to do more work with less effort. To stay aligned and productive as you scale, it's important to [approach how you collaborate with intention](#).

Here at Slack, we've instituted Maker Weeks and Focus Fridays. During these planned times, we challenge ourselves to replace internal meetings and focus our attention on delivering value for our customers. Ultimately, the goal is to create flexibility for employees by removing busywork so they can drive results.

- Maker Week is a week to make, not meet. Employees are encouraged to replace internal meetings with collaboration in Slack. It's a time to focus on work that's important to the business.
- Employees are encouraged to avoid internal meetings and snooze notifications on Fridays. These days should be used for deep thinking and creativity without distraction.

Indeed, the “have a meeting for everything” culture should become a relic of the past: Now we must make sure when and how we come together is thoughtful and purposeful. Learn more about what a [digital HQ](#) can do for you or [see it in action](#).



## About Slack

Slack is your Digital HQ—a place where work flows between your people, systems, partners and customers. Slack breaks down communication silos inside and beyond your organization by bringing teams and tools together around common goals, projects and processes in channels and in Slack Connect. It removes the limits of physical walls, giving people the flexibility to do their best work where, when and how they prefer with huddles and clips. And it empowers everyone to automate common tasks with apps and workflows. In the digital-first era, Slack makes work simpler, more pleasant and more productive.



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