CHAPTER 2

THE STAFF MEETING … AND BEYOND …*

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on workplace meetings identified critical design features, leader behaviors, group dynamics, post-meeting actions, and other factors which help determine the effectiveness of the meeting. But as much as the authors acknowledge that meetings may differ from each other, much of the research appears to assume that it is meaningful to talk about "the meeting" as a single, generic entity (most commonly, the regularly scheduled staff or department meeting). In fact, though, there are several common types of meetings which vary among themselves in terms of a number of measurable parameters such as structure, meeting members, meeting leader, timing and duration, and scope. It is a gratuitous assumption that what the authors know about workplace meetings based on one especially common type applies to all workplace meetings. This chapter offers a historical review of previous attempts to classify meeting types; it then overviews several common types which deviate from the standard staff meeting paradigm, including project team meetings, debrief meetings, committee meetings, site-wide meetings, shift change meetings, and crew formation meetings. In comparing these types to the staff meeting, the authors identify some of the critical differences, thereby providing a first step toward a true taxonomy of meetings.

Keywords: Workplace meetings; meetings research and practice; critical parameters of meetings; staff meeting; taxonomy; meeting types

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organizational scientists and practitioners have begun to focus intensely on workplace meetings, to better understand the factors that influence their perceived and objective effectiveness. As a result, there is an unprecedented level of interest in "the meeting" (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015). The now-rapidly growing area of meetings research often acknowledges that meetings may serve a wide range of purposes (Cohen, Rogelberg, Allen, & Luong, 2011; Shanock et al., 2013), and indeed that "No two meetings are alike …." (Allen et al., 2012, p. 406). Yet, research commonly focuses on a meeting-relevant topic (e.g., leader behavior, temporal issues, and surface acting among participants) with the implicit assumption that it is meaningful to talk about "meetings in general," as a single, unified type of event. Meeting science researchers proceed as though the main or only differentiator among different meetings is the "what" or "why" of the meeting, neither of which necessarily requires any adjustment in our research-based approach to "the meeting" (Kello, 2015).

The general assumption that the main differentiator among meeting types is the "what" or "why" (i.e., purpose) is inherently flawed. In reality, a month in the life of a typical employee in a typical organization might yield a range of different *types of meetings*, varying widely on numerous dimensions. For example, a department head might lead a regular monthly staff/department meeting, participate with peers in a boss-led weekly staff meeting, lead or participate in one or more project team meetings, and participate in a monthly unit-wide safety meeting. An hourly employee might participate in or lead daily shift-change meetings, a monthly safety committee meeting, a monthly unit-wide safety meeting, a series of post-event accident investigation meetings, and project team meetings. In some specialized/technical work environments (especially in so-called high reliability organizations), employees at all levels might participate in or lead a variety of additional, distinctive meeting types aimed at crew formation, work planning, and team learning. All of the aforementioned certainly qualify as meetings, but they vary widely from each other in terms of a number of parameters. The pre-work, design characteristics, leader approach, in-process steps, and outcomes are not the same for a quarterly plant review meeting and a daily shift-change meeting, or for a weekly staff meeting and a pre-surgery healthcare team meeting.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the variety of meeting types, discuss their various differences across a variety of parameters, and begin to help researchers acknowledge that the study of "the meeting" needs to drill down to a level of specificity currently overlooked in modern meetings research. We conclude the chapter with ideas for how to move the science of workplace meetings forward relative to the variety of meeting types that, to date, have not received the attention that "the meeting" has received.

THE FOCUS OF MEETINGS RESEARCH, PRESENT AND FUTURE

There is considerable interest in the meetings-research community, appropriately, in distinguishing "the meeting" from similar but different interactions (e.g., a training session, an impromptu conversation, group/bystander behavior in an emergency situation; Olien, Rogelberg, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Allen, 2015). In addition to distinguishing the meeting from non-meeting gatherings, researchers have also generally agreed that our focus is on intra-organizational meetings. That is, our research deals with meetings involving members of the organization in question, and not meetings with customers, suppliers, regulatory agencies, news media, etc. Further, unless explicitly stated differently, our research focus is on the live, face-to-face meeting (Allen et al., 2015). While virtual meetings are entirely legitimate, and a growing topic of study in and of themselves, in most cases we are referring to the familiar "group around a table in the meeting room." To add to the complexity of the issue, though, there is a hybrid between the "full virtual" meeting, where all participants are remote and communicating entirely via the available technology (e.g., Skype and Zoom) and the "full face-to-face" meeting. We can identify what we might call a "partial virtual" meeting, where many or most of the participants are face-to-face, but one or more are patched in. And while there is limited research on this issue (e.g., Lantz, 2001), in our experience as meeting leaders and participants, many meetings are of this hybrid type.

Beyond the frames we have agreed to as delimiting our focus in meetings research, might we also explore categorical differences among different types of meetings? Some of the popular literature on meetings acknowledges that there are indeed different "types," and some list prospective categories (e.g., Hartl, 2003; "The importance of workplace meetings," n.d.; "The six most common types of meetings," n.d.). But such preliminary efforts at classification do not, in our reading of them, suggest any differences in our research approach to the meeting. They are, rather, just categorical lists. Thus, in the following we review some of the previous attempts to categorize meeting types, and then transition to the types observed in the typical organization, with all the variety and differences that may have been overlooked in previous research.

The History of Classifying Meeting Types

Generally speaking, there are two major approaches for classifying phenomena in organizational studies (Hambrick, 1984): typologies (Barczak, Ellen, & Pilling, 1997) and taxonomies (Dixit, Whipple, Zinkhan, & Gailey, 2008; Kim & Lee, 1996). Typologies are typically conceptually derived schemes, whereas taxonomies are empirically derived (Hambrick, 1984). Previous attempts to classify meeting types include both typological and taxonomic approaches.

In terms of the history of classifying meeting types, a few researchers in the meetings domain have attempted to build typologies of meeting type and purpose. The first proposed typology described meetings as two types, scheduled or unscheduled (Schwartzman, 1986). The unscheduled meeting is largely marginalized, as most current research focuses on regularly scheduled, formal meetings of groups of two or more organizational members (Rogelberg, Leach, Warr, & Burnfield, 2006). Schwartzman's typology was an early attempt to categorize two large groups of meetings and provide a means for differentiating between formal vs informal meeting settings. Next, Bilbow (2002) distinguished among cross-departmental meetings, weekly departmental meetings, and brainstorming meetings as a proposed typology of meetings. These are likely to fall within Schwartzman's "scheduled" meeting category and provide only a slight increase in nuance for different meeting types.

Clearly, these existing typologies offer limited analytic usefulness and would likely not pass critiques by typology researchers, as described by Doty and Glick (1994), for at least two reasons. First, these typologies do not in fact propose theoretical relationships between the typology and various related constructs. That is, they do not identify multiple constructs, or the relationships between the constructs, nor do they provide recommendations on how to falsify the proposed relationships (Doty & Glick, 1994). Second, these typologies actually appear to represent general classification schemes rather than typologies, that is, they appear to be systematically categorized domains that are meant to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive sets (Doty & Glick, 1994). Schwartzman's (1986) initially proposed classification scheme (scheduled vs unscheduled meetings) appears to satisfy the criteria for rigorous classification, but not for a true typology.

Consistent with our concern that the focus has been too much on the "what" and "why" of meetings, other researchers have provided base rates of a proposed set of meeting purposes (Romano & Nunamaker, 2001). In a study by Monge, McSween, and Wyer (1989), general base rate percentages were provided concerning the purpose of meetings at 3M, a large US-based global conglomerate. From their data on 903 workplace meetings, the most commonly occurring meeting purposes included reconciling conflict (29%), group decision making (26%), and problem solving (11%). Although this selection of meeting purposes may provide mutually exclusive categories, the study was designed to help understand meeting effectiveness and to discover the prevalence of particular purposes rather than to develop an exhaustive list of potential meeting types or purposes in a typological or taxonomic manner. Thus, the study helps provide the "what" and "why" for 3M at that time, but does not translate into a useful typology or taxonomy of meeting purposes.

Building upon this earlier work, Allen, Beck, Scott, and Rogelberg (2014) developed a comprehensive taxonomy of meeting purposes. Again focusing on the "what" and "why" of meetings, they employed an inductive methodology using discourse analysis of qualitative meeting descriptions provided by working adults on an open-ended survey ($N = 491$). The analysis resulted in a 16-category taxonomy of meeting purposes, with the two most prevalent meeting purpose categories being "to discuss ongoing projects" (11.6% of meetings) and "to routinely discuss the state of the business" (10.8% of meetings). They argue that organizations can be defined by the purposes for which they hold meetings, and thus that managers need to be more attentive to the reasons they hold meetings. Although their work provided a comprehensive taxonomy of the reasons for having meetings, the results did not address various types that may have more than one of these purposes, or that may have parameters that vary from the standard "staff meeting."

In sum, these previous attempts at classifying meeting types via qualitative or quantitative taxonomic or typological procedures represent reasonable first steps.

However, these attempts have not resulted in the exploration of different meeting types as we will describe here. Further, and most generally, we believe that the differences among what are actually many distinctive types of workplace meetings argue for a more nuanced approach to "the meeting" in meetings research. There may be great value in attempting to create at least the beginnings of a working list of meeting types that are less about primary purpose and more about structural or logistical characteristics and differences.

To promote progress in both the research and the practice of meeting science, we now attempt to list several meeting types here that are neglected in these previous attempts and that demonstrate differences that are not consistent with previous assumptions concerning "the meeting." A summary is found in Table 2.1. To set the stage, we start with the foundational type.

TYPE #1: THE "GENERIC" (STAFF) MEETING

Based on our reading of the research and practice literature on meetings, combined with our experiences as organizational consultants, the meeting type that we believe is most commonly used as the prototype of "the meeting" in research is the regularly scheduled, recurring staff meeting (see Hoogeboom & Wilderom, 2015; Rogelberg, Shanock, & Scott, 2012; Romano & Nunamaker, 2001). The familiar staff meeting, or department meeting, has several critical dimensions: (1) It comprises a more or less stable group of employees, who know each other and have an ongoing working relationship. (2) They meet on a regularly scheduled basis (often weekly), at a set time and for a set duration (commonly 1 h), usually at a set location, and over a very long period of time, essentially permanently. (3) Their objective is most commonly to review and look back on recent actions and accomplishments, update (the leader and each other) on current status of issues of relevance, and forecast upcoming events of note. A primary purpose is coordination of activities among different functions in the organization (e.g., operations, sales, finance, and HR) in the near- and intermediate-term. In the course of their review and update they may identify problems to be addressed, agree on solutions to these problems, and make decisions. They may identify sub-teams of their full membership to meet separately (in what we will describe as a "departmental project team") and address such issues, bringing their work back to the full staff. And, while the usual focus of the staff meeting is tactical, occasionally strategic issues may be raised and discussed as well. Note that our experience with staff meetings suggests that any given meeting may have multiple purposes, and thus that attempted typologies which separate meeting types by purpose (e.g., Monge et al., 1989) are overly simplistic. (4) They have a set agenda, a kind of template which is broadly similar from meeting to meeting. (5) They are usually led by the boss, the manager of the employees who make up the participant group. (6) Action plans and assignments for follow-up are made, and usually captured in minutes, as needed. But again, other common workplace meetings diverge from this modal type on one of more of the dimensions outlined here, and thereby justify a more individualized approach to the science and practice of meetings.

Table 2.1. Meeting Types Described.

Type #	Name	Definition	Key Characteristics
1	Staff meeting	A regularly scheduled, recurring meeting of a group of employees to review recent activity, provide updates, forecast upcoming events, coordinate activities, and address current issues	• Regularly scheduled with set time, duration, and location • Typically have a set agenda • Led by boss/manager • Stable group of employees • Focus on day-to-day work activities, planning, and coordination
2	Project team meeting	Structured meeting of a group of employees brought together based on the project purpose to discuss planning, status updates, change control, and project review. There are three sub-types of project teams: (1) ad hoc project teams that are assembled from various departments/functions of the organization to identify an issue and make recommendations to solve the issue; (2) standing project teams that comprise a functional group within the organization that is tasked with many projects; and (3) departmental project teams of a sub-group of employees from a department that take on assigned projects in addition to their functional roles	• Schedule and duration of meetings can vary widely • Highly structured meeting processes • Leader of meeting may not be the boss For ad hoc and departmental project teams: • Projects can take considerable amount of time away from primary job roles • Life of the team is finite
3	Debrief meeting	Meeting called on an as-needed basis to discuss a work event or review regular operations with the goal of learning and improving efficiency	• Not regularly scheduled • Typically occur with the same or similar group of individuals • They are a reflexive act • May or may not be boss-led • Common in high-reliability organizations
4	Committee meeting	Regular meeting of a changing group of organizational members to discuss a specific topic area	• Members are from a variety of organizational departments • Committee members serve of a limited, specified period of time • Meeting leader may or may not be a higher up organizational individual • Focused on a specific, limited topic area • Typically occur regularly but may happen outside regular rhythm

Table 2.1. (*Continued*)

Type #	Name	Definition	Key Characteristics
5	Site-wide meeting	Regular but infrequent meeting to share information, updates, and forecasts to all members of a work site	• Large in number of participants • Duration can vary from one hour to a full day • One-way information sharing sessions
6	Shift change meeting	Brief, daily meeting with off-going shift members and oncoming shift members to exchange relevant information about the work and ending with a team huddle	• Occur daily and are brief in duration • Typically, not boss-led • Focus on "need-to-know" information • Completed standing up • Encompass information gathering stage and team huddle stage
7	Crew formation meeting	Meeting of a small group of individuals to discuss or review procedural guidelines before the start of work	• Participants may be new to each other • Meeting group is small (3–5 individuals) • Boss-led with greater "position power" • Meeting participants may change regularly • Common in high-reliability organizations

OTHER COMMON MEETING TYPES: VARIATIONS FROM THE STAFF MEETING PLATFORM

Type #2: Project Team Meetings

The project team meeting is common in the workplace, and is identified as a major type in some of the popular literature (e.g., Rogelberg, 2019). Given that project teams are so common, and have a specific timeline and targeted deliverable, project-team meeting processes are relatively structured and codified (see, e.g., Brownlee, 2008; "Everything you need," n.d.; Brodie, "6 key tips," n.d.), much more so than the staff meeting. Commonly, project teams will have a kick-off meeting, planning meetings, status update meetings, change control meetings (when the project plan needs to be adjusted), and project review meetings (Antas, 2019). The increasingly prominent "agile teams" are a type of project team whose work is highly codified, with language unique to the agile approach, for example, scrum, ceremonies, and sprint planning (McHugh, Conboy, & Lang, 2011; Yodiz, 2019). This distinctive language includes roles within the meeting such as the scrum master, which is typically a trained facilitator who may or may not be part of the project team. Even with these unique labels, the agile meeting shows the characteristics more broadly described as project team meetings.

We can further identify at least three sub-types of project teams, with each showing some differences from the staff meeting and from each other in terms of meeting characteristics. An ad hoc project team is a group assembled from various departments or functions in the organization, to identify an issue and make recommendations as to how to solve that issue. Members of the ad hoc project team have regular jobs beyond their work on the team, and they work on the project as an additional part-time assignment. A *standing* project team is a functional group within the organization that has the task of taking on many projects. Project work is their full-time job. A *departmental* project team is a sub-group of a department, who take on projects as assigned in addition to their regular functional roles.

Some critical differences from staff meetings. The typical *ad hoc project team* meeting is starkly different from the staff or department meeting, in at least the following ways. First, participants are not a stable group initially. Indeed, the team may be assembled from many different parts of the organization, with members who do not usually work together and may not even know each other beforehand. Thus, leadership must initially focus on early team formation, relationship building, clear roles and responsibilities, ground rules for meetings, timelines, and the like, while later meetings will be much more content-focused. Once underway such meetings typically do comprise a stable group, in an ongoing relationship. But again, the team is specifically constructed around the purposes of the project, not a "natural work group." Second, while meetings are scheduled, the schedule (and duration) of project team meetings are not regular, but instead may flex widely, as a function of where the group is in the overall project process. Third, project work, including project team meetings, takes a considerable amount of participants' time, depending on the nature and duration of the project, impacting their primary job. Fourth, the life of the team is finite. Once they have made their recommendations and their work on the project is complete, their project meeting structure and participants' team member status go away. So, some preparation for and focus on adjourning (see Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) as a phase in the life of the team may be especially critical for project team meetings. Fifth, highly structured meeting processes, firm timelines, and the clear expectation of a deliverable make it more likely that "things get done" in the meeting, rather than just discussion. Sixth, the meeting leader usually has explicit training, even certification, in the skills of leading effective project team meetings. He/she may not be the boss of all participants (or any of the participants), and may not even be above them in the organizational hierarchy. The meeting leader may even be an outside facilitator. Thus, some of the power-related dynamics such as surface acting (see Shanock et al., 2013), boss dominance, low participant interaction, etc., may not be in play.

The typical *standing project team* meeting is similar to the staff meeting in some ways, namely, the core group is largely stable (though from project to project other stakeholders may be brought in). But the standing project team meeting is also different from the staff or department meeting, in at least the following ways. First, and similar to ad hoc project team meetings, even though their meetings are scheduled, the duration and schedule of standing project team meetings are not regular and reflect the stage of the overall project. Second, standing project meetings are typically less discussion based, but rather have structured processes, set timelines, and deliverable expectations. Third, again similar to ad hoc project team meetings, the meeting leader is usually trained in running the meetings and/or an outside facilitator is used to ensure meeting processes flow properly. Fourth, and critically, project work and the meetings associated with their projects constitute their fulltime job.

The typical *departmental project team* meeting involves a sub-team of departmental members who are assigned to, or volunteer to work on, a project for the benefit of the department. Their meetings are similar to those of the ad hoc project team, except that the members are all from a single department and know each other, and it is likely that their meetings structure is less codified than the ad hoc or standing project teams, and they would likely have lees need for specific preparation for "adjourning" (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Otherwise, their meetings are similar to the ad hoc project team meeting, and different from the staff meeting, in at least the following ways:

First, while meetings are scheduled, the schedule (and duration) of project team meetings is not "regular," but instead may flex widely, as a function of where the departmental project team is in the overall project process. Second, project work, including project team meetings, can take a considerable amount of participants' time, depending on the nature and duration of the project, and the stage of the project they are in, impacting their primary job. Third, the life of the sub-team is finite. Once they have made their recommendations and their work on the project is complete, their project meeting structure and participants' team member status go away. Fourth, the structure of the meeting processes, firm timelines, and the clear expectation of a deliverable vary widely, with some departmental teams adhering to codified project management processes, and others being much more freestyle. Fifth, the leader of meetings will usually not be the boss of all participants (or any of the participants), and may not even be above them in the organizational hierarchy. Thus, as with other project meeting sub-types, some of the familiar power-related dynamics identified as common in the meetings research, such as surface acting (see Shanock et al., 2013), boss dominance, low participant interaction, etc., may not be in play.

Again, while project team meetings in their various forms are common in the workplace, and there is a pop literature on the do's and don'ts of project team meetings, project team meetings have not been the focus of our meeting-science research. It would be very interesting to see whether and to what extent our understanding of best practice in meetings, based on the staff meeting (e.g., Lehmann-Willenbrock, Rogelberg, Allen, & Kello, 2018 and Rogelberg, 2019) applies as well to project team meetings. So far there has been very little connection between the two literatures. Rich research questions stem from the kinds of differences we have outlined here. As but one example, do the highly codified meeting processes typical of ad hoc and standing project team meetings in particular result in higher levels of participant satisfaction in such project team meetings?

Type #3: Debriefs

Along with the staff meeting, the debrief is among the most researched of the meeting types listed here (e.g., Allen, Baran, & Scott, 2010). A recent scholarly review by Allen, Reiter-Palmon, Crowe, and Scott (2018) in the *American Psychologist* addresses the extensive and growing literature base associated with the debrief, largely from a learning-meeting and adaptability perspective. As an example of a specific subtype of debrief meeting, the *after action review* brings an intact first responder group (e.g., emergency medical technician, police department, and fire department) or military tactical squad, nuclear control room crew, or plant fire-response team, together after the group has engaged in work-related activities, to share feedback about their intervention and improve their ability to respond in the future (Scott, Allen, Bonilla, Baran, & Murphy, 2013). Sometimes these meetings are preceded by an adverse event (e.g., Reiter-Palmon, Kennel, Allen, Jones, & Skinner, 2015), though this is not a requirement for their occurrence. In recent years, military combat teams and emergency responders have embraced the after-action review form of debrief as a mode of regular operations to be included after every exercise or call (Allen, Reiter-Palmon, Kennel, & Jones, 2018). Although similar to a staff meeting in that many of the same individuals gather together on a regular basis, there are some interesting differences, beyond being event-based vs regularly scheduled.

Some critical differences from staff meetings. As noted, debriefs such as after actions reviews are event-based, not regularly scheduled meetings. The event may include a negative stimulus that requires discussion (e.g., a post-fall huddle in the healthcare setting) or simply a review of regular operations for the benefit of learning, developing, and improving team efficiency. Second, they are focused on de-brief of a specific tactical intervention, after the fact. Thus, they are a reflexive act, involving group sensemaking about past events, with an eye toward team learning and changing future behavior (Reiter-Palmon, Kennel, Allen, & Jones, 2018). Third, they may or may not be led by the boss. Although many debriefs are directed by the boss or supervisor, in some cases the person who calls for the debrief, who may not be the organizationally designated leader, leads the de-brief meeting. Finally, the impact of the leader in promoting psychological safety and the ability of participants to speak up and even disagree without jeopardy, identified as an important variable in the staff meeting (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2018), may be even stronger in the after-action review.

Type #4: Committee Meetings

Meetings of safety committees, recognition committees, or any of a number of similar committees (including boards of directors) bear some similarity to some forms of project team meetings, and differ from staff meetings. Like project teams, committees have a focused, delimited area of responsibility. But their "project" doesn't come to an end. Rather, their work in their topic area continues as new information, tasks, and opportunities emerge. An individual member's involvement is not permanent. Committee members serve for a specified period, then rotate out, as new members rotate in. But the committee continues to exist and meet regularly, indefinitely. As with project teams, committee meeting frequency and duration may flex widely with conditions. As widespread as committees and committee meetings are in the organizational world, as yet they have received little or no research attention per se as a meeting type.

Some critical differences from staff meetings. First, they usually comprise a small group of members who do not normally work together, and may not all know each other before they join the committee. They serve, usually on a volunteer basis, for a limited, specified period of time. Second, committee meetings may or may not be led by a higher up; if so, that leader will usually not be the boss of all the participants. Third, meetings are focused squarely on a specific, limited topic area, not a general business update or forecast. Fourth, while scheduled meetings typically do take place on a regular basis, often monthly, additional called meetings may occur outside the regular rhythm (e.g., a safety committee may have an event-based meeting, coming together to review an accident, similar to an after-action review).

Type #5: Site-wide Meetings

Site-wide, "all-hands" meetings are large scale affairs, and in the case of a large work site, very large scale. By definition, such meetings involve the entire workforce of a site, such as a factory or office. Thus, they may include hundreds of participants. Such meetings are commonly led by top executives on site (Plant Manager and Department Heads). They are regularly scheduled but infrequent (monthly, quarterly, or annual). Their duration commonly ranges from as little an hour to as much as a day or more. They are necessarily largely one-way information-sharing sessions, with the leader and others giving presentations.

Some critical differences from staff meetings. First, the sheer size of the participant group is clearly a distinctive feature. All the meeting types identified so far involve relatively small groups. Site-wide meetings do not reflect the small group dynamics typical of the other types. They have their own distinctive in-process dynamics. Second, meeting duration can be much longer than the staff meeting. While some may be the conventional hour or so, others may be all-day affairs, or longer. Third, meeting outcomes are commonly less specific. In most cases, there are not the action plans and individual action assignments that are typical of staff meetings, though there can be. Indeed, site-wide meetings can spawn ad hoc project teams, with their associated meeting structure. Site-wide meetings are most often information sharing updates and forecasts over a longer time span than the staff meeting. As with committee meetings, there is as yet little if any research focused on site-wide meetings.

Type #6: Shift Change Meetings

Common in multi-shift operations, shift-change meetings are small scale affairs. Typically, members of an off-going shift at a plant meet with their counterparts on the on-coming shift, in their work area, individually or in small groups, and share relevant information about what they encountered on their shift (e.g., equipment problems and schedule changes) or what is coming up that helps the ongoing shift prepare for their work. Also typically, the oncoming team then huddles to ensure that they all know what each of them has learned.

Some critical differences from staff meetings. First, the meetings occur daily, are very brief in duration, and are most often not boss led. Second, they are aimed at very short-term coordination, sharing immediate tactical, "need-to-know" information. Third, such shift meetings are almost always "stand-up meetings," with information exchanged in brief conversation, followed by the team huddle. Again, such brief, daily, info-share meetings have as yet received little if any research attention.

Type #7: Crew Formation Meetings

Crew formation/pre-work meetings are common in a variety of high reliability organizational environments, such as commercial aviation (Hackman, 1993), nuclear operations (Frye, Harrington, & Kello, 1987), and healthcare, especially in operating room/surgical teams (e.g., Parush, 2007). The available literature on best practice in such specialized meetings is more anecdotal and practice-oriented than research-based. However, the authors have had a great deal of applied experience in consulting with a variety of high reliability organizations, and have identified some of the distinctive features of such crew formation meetings from first-hand observation.

Some critical differences from staff meetings. Distinctive features of crew formation meetings, differentiating them from staff meetings, include at least the following: Participants may be new to each other (airlines), the meetings are brief and occur only once, and the participant group is very small (often as few as 2 or 3). Additionally, while the meetings are commonly boss-led, they are not exclusively so, and when they are, the position power of the boss (lead surgeon, captain, and senior reactor operator) may be perceived as even greater than in a staff meeting. In crew formation meetings, meeting content is centered on tactical/procedural guidelines, that is, how we will function as a team during our flights, or as we perform surgery. After an operation, or a short series of flights (airline cockpit crews commonly fly together for a month), the group adjourns, and its members join new groups, and the crew formation process starts anew. As far as we know, there is little in the way of practical guidelines for "how to" form a crew for short-term tactical performance. Additionally, as yet there is little or no rigorous research into crew formation meeting strategies.

DISCUSSION

The foregoing review of meeting types suggests some potential commonalities across types that are worth noting. These commonalities have generally not been previously tested or investigated in the different types, but have been shown to matter in the staff meeting, and thus may be worth considering here. First, in most of the meetings listed, the critical role of the leader is identified as a key characteristic. The leader may be the hierarchical leader in charge of the team or he/she may be a team member charged with leading the meeting. Research suggests that the leader's style in leading the meeting is crucial to the success of the meeting (Mroz, Yoerger, & Allen, 2018). And, again, leaders of only certain types of meetings (namely, project team meetings) are likely to have explicit, systematic training in the skills and strategies of leading effective meetings. Second, and related, participation is likely a key element of effective meetings across the types listed. Previous research on the generic staff meeting confirms that active participation in meetings is essential to employees' overall engagement in their work, and meeting leaders set the stage for such participation (Yoerger, Crowe, & Allen, 2015).

Third, of particular importance to meetings after adverse events or calls (e.g., debriefs/after-action reviews), psychological safety may prove important across the meeting types mentioned. Without psychological safety, meeting participants may filter their comments related to decisions or ideas presented during the meeting. Future research should consider incorporating this important variable, clearly identified as especially impactful in after-action review meetings, into the study of other meeting types. Fourth, in most cases, the types listed could benefit from capturing the outcomes and action items from the meeting, sharing those with key stakeholders, and holding people accountable to those tasks, as is a best practice in staff meetings, but not widely done (Malouff, Calic, McGrory, Murrell, & Schutte, 2012). As noted, such detailed and audited action plans are typical of the more structured forms of project team meeting (e.g., Kello, 2015). More research is needed to see the longer-term effects, across the meeting types identified here, of effective outcome/action tracking versus limited or little accountability processing.

Regardless of these similarities, many structural differences were identified among the meeting types listed here. Such parametric differences open up opportunities for further research using a variety of methods. Two potential avenues are readily apparent from our review. First, we could envision a massive survey-based correlation study using a large representative sample of working adults. In this study, participants would be asked if they lead or participate in the various types of meetings. Then, for each type they checked, a variety of meeting design characteristics (input), in-meeting behaviors (processes), and meeting outcomes (outcomes) would be rated by the participant and correlated with their assessment of meeting effectiveness. As a descriptive study, the resulting data would mainly help to further codify and validate the type-categorization presented here, and would clearly expand our concept of "the meeting." Critically, such a study would also provide a person-centered as opposed to a meeting-centered approach, and begin to broaden our knowledge by capturing the meeting experience of individual employees in some detail. This person-centered approach to meetings has not yet been addressed in meetings research. For example, when a participant in a research study indicates that he/she feels that "30% of the meetings I attend are unproductive," we take that figure as indicative of all their meetings. But is that 30% the figure that applies to all meetings across the various types in which they participate? Or might they be they saying

> all the ad hoc project teams I attend are 100% effective, and 50% of the shift change meetings are too, but only 10% of my boss's staff meetings are, so I'll say 30%.

Only an individual approach of the sort described here gives us a meaningful answer to this question.

Second, another potential avenue for research would be to select a meeting type and dig deeper, doing a series of studies, similar to what is already available on the generic staff meeting. The after-action review research provides a nice example of true success in this avenue (Allen, Reiter-Palmon, Kennel, & Jones, 2018). In this process, a series of correlational designs and experimental designs would be required to dig into the nature of the selected meeting type. Take committee meetings, for example. One research question (of many) might be, "What impact does committee membership and participation in committee meetings have on broader participant attitudes beyond the confines of the committee meeting itself?" A survey could be used to assess perceived participation and broader organizational attitudes to see if they are related. Then, assuming that a relationship exists, observational research could investigate the meeting practices in committee meetings and then provide ideas for interventions in an experimental framework to enhance the effectiveness of those meetings. The experiment could then show how one might enhance the connection between participation or other characteristics/factors, committee meeting effectiveness, and organizational attitudes. Further, this sort of multi-method multi-study approach could be applied to all the types mentioned to address the variety of research questions that emerge from further consideration of the types.

Although truly enthusiastic about the potential for further inquiry, the foregoing review and discussion are not without limitations. The most prominent limitation is that there are likely other meeting types beyond the ones reviewed here. We cannot claim that our preliminary step toward a taxonomy of meeting types is at all comprehensive. Other meeting types may or may not fit within the categories we have listed, which are common ones based on our research and applied experience. When additional types are identified, we hope that researchers and practitioners will describe them in detail, and add them to the queue of meetings deserving attention, as we expand the focus of meeting science. We hope that our preliminary effort advances the dialogue about the multifaceted nature of "the meeting," in light of the limited lens through which we have viewed meetings to date (Allen et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

In this review of meeting types, we drew a clear line between the generic staff meeting and a variety of other meeting types that hitherto have received limited attention from researchers, with noted exceptions. Our intention is to expand the focus of meeting science to include meeting types that have different characteristics from the familiar staff meeting, which, again, has been the target of most research in our field. We would like to see the same level of empirical analysis applied to committee meetings, site-wide meetings, and the other types we identified, which are common in the experience of most employees, and which may have the same impact on employee attitudes as the highly researched staff meeting. A better understanding of how to enhance, improve, and avoid common pitfalls for meeting success in these other under-studied types would be of great value to leaders and participants.

As more nuanced research proceeds, allowing us to better understand meetings in their many forms, we call for continuing efforts to translate the science to practice through trade and other publications (e.g., Rogelberg, 2019). The ultimate applied goal is the evidence-based improvement of all meetings, including but not limited to the generic staff meeting.

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