46 This is how you stop going from one meeting to the next

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SPEAKERS

Murielle Machiels

In 2020 life as we knew it changed drastically and it had a huge impact on workers. 87% of people worked on average one hour more every day, versus 2019. Seven out of 10 experienced burnout at least once. poor mental health rose from 7% in 2019, to 27% in 2020. And 62% of the respondents have experienced imposter syndrome and more men than women, a sense of self doubt related to work accomplishments. And so 26% of deadlines were missed each week. And these are some numbers from a huge bowl among 13,000 people around the world that has been made by Asana, and by Berkeley University. So working remotely had it stole. And yet, many people don't want to go back to the office full time. We missed the social interactions, and at the same time, we enjoyed the flexibility. And although those figures are quite negative, there are still some teams that manage to try thanks to one crucial elements. And one element that if you don't have it, remote teams will fail and people will get overworked. And this element was already important. If you want to increase agility and engagement within organisations, have you guessed what it is and if you have followed me and listen to other podcasts, you should know what it is. What you need for high performing remote teams today is empowerment. When teams are empowered people deliver better results and are happier. And that's why we decided to develop a brand new course that you can that starts today In fact, leading to empowerment for remote hybrid and face to face themes. For this edition only it will be offered as a bonus to leading authentically in digital times from Solvay Brussels school. And afterwards, both programmes will be sold separately. So if it's time for you to have a reset with a new mindset, better suited business techniques and leadership habits so that you can have impact balance and meaning just go to the show notes of this episode or to www key leader.com. Now, why do people work so much in 2020? Well, according to the same survey, there are three reasons The first one was workload was too high. And if that's your case, be sure to listen to Episode 43 or other episodes, but especially 43. The second reason why people worked so much was too many emails and messages to respond to. And the third one is too many meetings. And that's what I wanted to talk about in this episode. How can you avoid going from one meeting to the next for a whole day, with barely time to think to breathe to eat or to do your own work? I'm Murielle CEO mom and educator. I used to work really hard and sacrifice

the important things to me until I lost my motivation. Fast forwards passed many failed attempts and lessons learned. And I found a way to reach great results while working less. today. I'm obsessed with helping other leaders build meaningful lives. So each week I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organisation. This is rebel leader with a heart.

Why do we spend so much time in meetings? Well, to align and to inform others? Probably because you are interdependent of other teams and the more interdependencies the more meetings. So the best way to have less meetings is by removing interdependencies by changing the structure. Now that's not the goal of this podcast. If you want to know more, I did a whole podcast about that number 13 how to break silos and improve collaboration. But that is how you will get the biggest gain by changing the structure of your organisation and removing as much interdependencies as possible. But of course, that's not always possible for you. You might not be the one That can make such a decision. And that's why I'm going to share other strategies that you could apply today so that you don't spend all your time in meetings. Well, the first thing you could do is always ask for an agenda of a meeting. Because that way, you can see if you should be in that meeting, because if the agenda is all about things that are not important to you, or that you cannot bring added value to you should not be present to that meeting. So that's the second point is, say no more in function of what you want to achieve, because many meetings are out of habits. Or you might be invited out of politeness, or because important people will be present and being there might give you more visibility, or just because something might come up that concerns you. So just look at the agenda, look at if you are really necessary in that meeting, of course, go if not say no more to the meetings, don't be afraid to say no more. And again, go to Episode 43. If you want a better way of saying no a productive way that will even boost your career. Now, should you be like in standby, because maybe people might need you for certain points in that meeting. You can also just be in standby, just say to the people in that meeting, you know, I know you might have questions for me, I won't be present, but I will be available. So if you need something for me, just give me a call. And I will join the meeting just for that point. And that is already decreasing. Instead of spending one hour or two hours in that meeting, it might be reduced to the 10 minutes where your presence is really needed. So first, ask an agenda to say no more tree be in standby, should you be present instead of being in the meeting? fourthly, you can send in a colleague instead of the whole department. So sometimes we have meetings and we think, Okay, everyone needs to be there. But no, a colleague could be there. And then he or she will inform you of the two dues or of the important point. So instead of being like five colleagues in that meeting of one hour, where you lose five hours, you have one colleague who's there for one hour, and then that gives you the feedback in a couple of minutes. The fifth point and this one is really, really important. And this I wish I had discovered this when I was still working in a bigger organisation, because it would have saved us not only a lot of time in meetings, but also a lot of emails. And that's use a project management tool like Asana. So we use Asana. And there, Asana is really a project management tool. And everyone in the team has a login to that tool and uses it. And we put our two dues in that tool. And then once a week, we sit together and we look at what everyone is going to do that week. And we agree on that. And then we don't need to know where people are because everything is visible to everyone. So we have for instance things where we are interdependent because of course, today the work is become so complex that often you just need to collaborate to deliver some work. And so you need to know when somebody has done step one, so that you can do step two, but you don't have to send an email or or have a meeting about it when you are using a tool like Asana because we have our processes described. So we know exactly

what the steps are for every project, and who is going to do what and what tasks are connected to other tasks so that when my colleague has finished one task, I get a notification that it's finished and that I can do my work. So no email, no meeting conversation, I can immediately see it and you can put comments in it as well if you need to give some comments. And of course, you can still give a little call if it's needed. But by using a project management tool like Asana, where we don't only have our to dues, but we also have all our processes that are clearly described in saves us a lot of time in meetings and a lot of clarity. Because why do you sometimes spend so much time in meetings? It's because also things are not clear. And how can you bring clarity by having clear processes. But in the past, I remember, we describe processes somewhere in Excel. And then we were doing something and we forgot about it. Well, when you have your processes described in your project management tool, well, you just go through it at the end, you evaluate, you see if something should be improved, so that you avoid making mistakes, and so that you get better each time at what you do. And then when you have to do that, again, we just copy that process, give it a new name, and all the names are already there. And everything is so much clearer that we don't spend so much time in meetings. So use a project management tool. And I talked about Asana, but there are others, I think, Trello or monday.com. So really, this is useful. And when you start using that, just start using it, for instance, only for yourself, and maybe for one project at first. So when you start implementing such a tool, don't do it, like some people can do, we're going to do like a whole project for this with the whole organisation and look at how we're going to organise it because then the step is too high to use it. I often say just start with yourself by using it yourself so that you can see that it's useful, and maybe for one project, and then if you see that it works, you can put another project in it. And so you grow with it. And you can then really use it as you see fit for you and your team, then the sixth point is for C slots of 20 or 40 minutes of meetings instead of the 30 and 60 minutes, and start them at instead of at the hour, start them at the hour and 10 or at the hour and 40. So don't start a meeting at two o'clock start the meeting at two o'clock and 10 minutes. Because that will allow you to have short breaks, because maybe you need to do something in between or you need to take a deep breath or you need to go to the bathroom or to simply organise your thoughts or whatever. But if you spent your time going from one meeting to the next and and sometimes I hear that, that virtually it has even become worse, because in the past, you had to physically go from one meeting to the next. So you had at least that little break of walking from one meeting to the next. Now some people that just go from one room to the next without leaving their desk. And that is not healthy. That's why I believe that having slots of 20 minutes instead of 30 and 40 minutes instead of 60 will be much more productive. And it will force you to go to the essence, then the seventh point is agree on common an interrupted focus time with your team. And even with your organisation. And I know a lot of you might already do that we have no meetings on Monday morning and no meetings on Friday afternoon, for instance. But then you have exceptions and exceptions and exceptions. And that's why I like to say and allow yourself one exception per week no more because you will have exceptions because maybe someone from another country that don't know that you have this focused uninterrupted time will ask something for you. And you cannot always say no. So allow yourself one exception per week. But agree on common an interrupted focus time. Because remember, that's when you are multitasking when you're going from one meeting to the next from one email to the next interrupted and you try to deliver something in between. Research has shown that it costs you up to 40% extra time when you are multitasking. So having uninterrupted focus time where you can really focus on delivering one thing at a time will be very productive because it will help you save 25 to 40% of your time already. And then number eight block time slots for yourself in your calendar and see them as

very important meetings that you cannot cancel. So the more blocks You plan in your agenda, the less unplanned blocks you will need. So if you really block time in your agenda for work, for taking breaks, for doing some analyses for thinking, for breathing for increasing your energy or whatever, or for working on a project you really need to work on. If you plan these blocks, and really see them as very important meetings with yourself that you don't cancel, it will make it easier also, because people when they're looking at your agenda, they they will see that it's not possible to have a meeting at that moment, and they won't book that slot that you had foresee for yourself. So what were the eight strategies always asked for an agenda. Secondly, say no more. Thirdly, be in standby if you just need to be there for in case of fourthly send a colleague instead of the whole department. Fifth, use a project management tool, six for C slots of 20 minutes instead of 30 or 40 minutes instead of 67. agree on a common uninterrupted focus time, and eight block time slots for yourself in your calendar that you won't be able to cancel. And remember that being in meeting all the time is not a proxy of your seriousness. being busy all the time doesn't make you important, we shouldn't glorify buisiness On the contrary. Okay, I hope you enjoyed this episode, and I will see you next week again, bye.

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