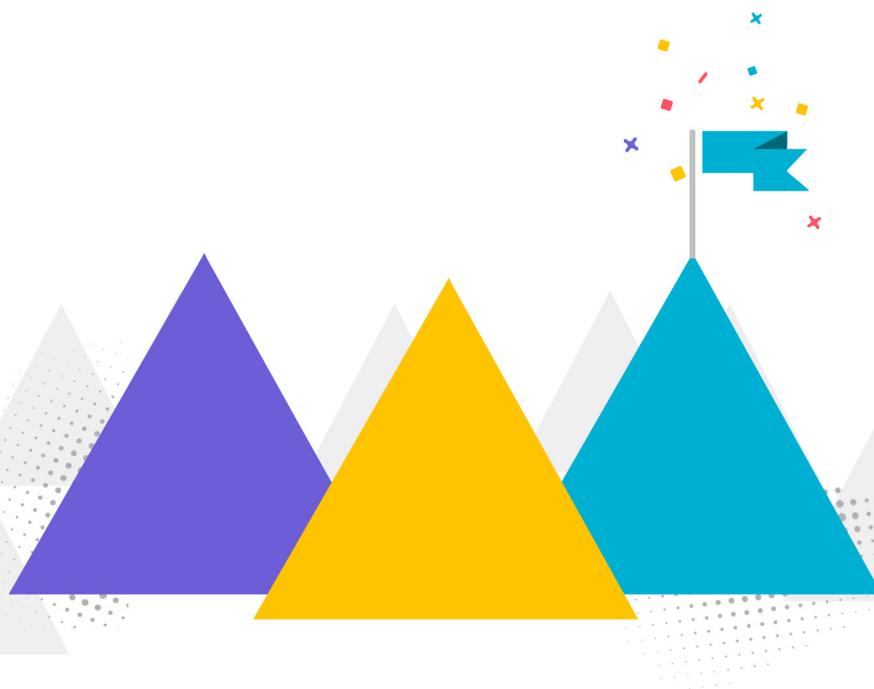


# Using the AAA Meeting Framework

*for More Effective Meetings*



Workshop

After years of sitting through days filled with meetings, extensive surveys, and many hours of research, we've distilled down the key to effective meetings into an easy to understand framework that is easy and repeatable.

## What is the AAA framework? (pronounced triple-A)

The AAA framework is a lightweight way to ensure your meetings are effective and productive. By using the framework to structure your meetings, you can walk away from every meeting feeling that it was productive. When conducting meetings, make sure they have the following:

They should have **Agendas**

They should be **Actionable**

...and they should be **Accessible**

What do we mean by these terms? Well, we are glad you asked

### **Agendas**

Multiple studies show that the biggest pet peeve of meeting participants is meetings that stray off course. Studies also show that more than 70% of scheduled meetings don't have an agenda. Step #1 to having a productive meeting is to layout the schedule ahead of time. It's much easier to stay on course when you have a gameplan already laid out. Each agenda item should have a topic, an owner (or owners), time to cover the topic, and any possible files or resources attendees might need to have access to.

### **Actionable**

If you are having a meeting, there should be a specific desired outcome you are trying to get out of it. When creating a meeting, ask yourself what decisions need to be made, who needs to do them, and when do they need them done. You may not have the answers to all of that when creating the meeting, but the

attendees should be aware that those questions need to be answered by the time the meeting is over. By setting the stage that the meeting is intended to have a specific outcome, the team will be much more likely to stay focused on actually getting stuff done.

## **Accessible**

The notes, decisions, and actions taken in a meeting can oftentimes be hard to manage. Having attendees have multiple versions of the meeting notes or have 5 different places where actions were documented (Jira/Trello/Slack etc.) isn't great for anyone. Having a single source of truth for what happened in a meeting takes your meetings to a whole nother level. Make it easy for everyone to have access to everything that happened at the meeting. Whether it's emailing out the meeting minutes after the meeting ends or making it easy for everyone to go back to meeting in Workshop, it should be incredibly easy for everyone to go back and see what happened during that meeting.

## **An example of AAA in practice**

Let's play out a scenario and give you some concrete examples of what a AAA meeting would actually look like. In this example, we'll say your marketing team has been tasked with creating a campaign around a new product your team is going to launch. You want to hold a meeting before the launch to ensure your team is on the same page with each other and to ensure that any outstanding items will be addressed prior to the launch. When you get the team together, here is an example of the type of agenda you'll need to create to ensure you cover all the key areas for your team in the allotted time.

## Project Apollo Pe-Launch Marketing Meeting

June 3rd 10am-10:50am

Sarah, Jamal, Cory, Jess

**Topic:** Apollo timeline overview  
**Owner:** Sarah  
**Duration:** 10 mins  
**Details:** Sarah will give the team a brief walkthrough of the new product, timelines for the launch, and what the exec team is expecting out of the marketing team for the launch.  
**Resources:** none

**Topic:** Advertising creative and budgets  
**Owner:** Jamal  
**Duration:** 15 mins  
**Details:** Jamal will walk through the variants of the ads we'll be posting on Facebook and Google (see attached image to review prior to the meeting). He'll also give an overview of our ad budget and allocation to each platform  
**Resources:** Project\_Apollo\_Ads.ppt

**Topic:** Influencer campaign  
**Owner:** Cory  
**Duration:** 10 minutes  
**Details:** Cory will walkthrough the influencers that have committed to posting about Project Apollo on launch day. He'll also give an update on the contracts that still need to be signed.  
**Resources:** none

**Topic:** Marketing Site design and launch  
**Owner:** Jess  
**Duration:** 15 mins  
**Details:** Jess will show us the final design for the marketing site and walkthrough what outstanding items we'll need to get done before we can push it live.  
**Resources:** [staging.coolsite.com/apollo](http://staging.coolsite.com/apollo)

As you can see, spending a few minutes creating a detailed agenda will really help the meeting get off on the right foot. It's crystal clear what is going to be discussed, who will be discussing it, how much time they have to cover their topic, and you can see some of the items they'll be covering ahead of time so everyone on the team can come prepared to participate in a meaningful way.

Now that you've seen a quality agenda, let's look at some examples of what it means to be actionable. When we talk about your meetings being actionable, we mean that very clear decisions and actions are taken during the meeting. At the end of your meeting, you should be able to easily see a list of the actions that were taken in a meeting. They might look something like this:

 Action item: **Sarah to follow up with product to finalized price**

 Decision recorded: **Launch date will be moved back 2 days to not interfere with the Summer Sale campaign**

 Asana task created by Jamal: **Review ad performance after week 1**

 Action item: **Cory to get contracts signed by June 5th**

 Jira ticket created: **Jess to fix CSS bug in that appears in IE**

Now when your team looks back at the meeting, they can see exactly what came out of the meeting in a clear and concise way. By having your meetings biased towards action, you'll eliminate those meetings where everyone leaves and you realize you didn't actually make any progress towards anything.

After the meeting, your team is going to need to be able to reference back those meeting notes and actions in a clear and meaningful way. After all, what good is making decisions in a meeting if they aren't easy to recall later?

If you are using a tool like [Workshop](#), making your meetings accessible is a snap. You'll have a couple of options for making sure the team has access to the meeting outcomes:

1. Any attendees can just click on the link in their calendar invite to go back to Workshop and see the agenda, notes, and actions.

**OR**

2. Send a follow-up email or Slack message to all meeting attendees with the meeting minutes and decisions. If you are using Workshop for this, it's as simple as pressing one-button.

Whichever way you choose, the key is to make it easy as possible for the team to go back and reference what was decided. If you just do that, you are already on the right track.

## How to get your team to buy-in and adopt the framework

Generally, the best way to get buy-in from your team when implementing something new is to get the team involved in the process. To help get your team on board, you'll want to try a few things to help identify areas of opportunities to make your meetings better, and a gameplan for how to actually do it. Here's what we suggest:

### Step 1

Do a quick survey of your team to determine what they'd consider some of the biggest pet peeves with meetings and why some of their meetings aren't as productive as they could be. Some of the most common responses you can expect are:

- Meetings that are unproductive or don't have clear outcomes
- Meetings veering off schedule
- When a meeting should have been an email instead

### Step 2

Share the results with the team and suggest a plan to address them. This is where the AAA framework will come in.

If the survey results in mostly productivity-related responses as we covered in step 1, then it should be pretty easy to introduce the AAA framework to the team and walk through how it can keep your meetings on task and have tangible outcomes for each and every meeting. Ask the team to commit to making sure every single meeting has a clear agenda, has a list of actionable outcomes, and all attendees will have a copy of the meeting notes (including decisions and tasks made in the meeting) for the next 30 days.

**Pro tip:** If you use Workshop for your meeting, it makes it easy to ensure all your meetings are AAA meetings.

### Step 3

Reconvene with the team after 30 days to see if they feel their team meetings are more productive. If the team has done a good job of adhering to making each meeting a AAA meeting, the answer should be a resounding yes. Once the team is bought in on the framework, make sure to have them commit to making sure everyone is using the AAA framework moving forward. By meeting attendees helping hold the organizers accountable, it will ensure your meetings stay highly productive.

## Start having AAA meetings

In general, employees want to feel like their time isn't being wasted. For a lot of employees, meetings end up being one of the biggest wastes of time in the workplace and take away from their ability to do their day to day work. By implementing the AAA framework, you'll create a win-win. Your team will be happier because their time isn't being wasted, and you will be able to move faster and more efficiently by making sure your meetings are biased towards action. Sound good to you? We thought so.

[Sign up for Workshop today and start having AAA meetings!](#)