

PROJECT PLANNERS - WHAT DRIVES US WILD? WHAT KEEPS US SANE?

[based on staff discussions during Winter 2009]

Minutes take hours, not minutes?

- notes based on agendas, handwritten and photocopied
- live note-taking via laptop
- recording and transcribing later
- record less: differentiate between actions/decisions and all else
- organize notes for maximum end-user clarity.
- keep brief: summary points, not full transcription
- visual note taking (paper or board), photograph and distribute/post images.

Meeting scheduling driving you crazy?

- Sheila! (but she's slated for other tasks, so use with discretion and permission)
- Doodle
- student help

Too many meetings?

- insist on advance goals agendas, brief summary notes distributed within a few days
 - with decisions, tasks, homework, next meeting date, etc.
- if more than one of us is scheduled to attend, confirm why: don't overstaff.
- consider alternatives: video or phone conferencing.
- if low priority, procrastinate!

Too many committee assignments?

- clarify role & need - use as needed.
- identify alternative (more appropriate) participants.
- fly under the radar, avoid visibility when overwhelmed.
- Refusnik: just say no.

Overwhelmed by email?

- stop using reply-to-all, and ask others to do the same.
- use phone or in person unless written tracks are needed.
- don't let it be an interruption (shorten auto-check interval): e-mail is a tool, not a job.
- sort by subject, and then read up from bottom until fully understood
- use appropriate subject lines, and fix subject lines on a thread that has a bad one.
- use search tools instead of sorting into folders
- see Fred's previous info sheet.

Overwhelmed by tasks?

- identify frustrations, and concentrate on fixing them
- clarify goals to help set priorities
- plan ahead, and check course repeatedly
- use a task list or matrix creatively

Overwhelmed?

- take mental breaks - get up and walk around every 20 minutes.
- go for a walk for lunch.
- vary tasks during the day.