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A hybrid meeting where those at home speak

Fourteen things to tick for 60 minutes. Plus what to do when it still doesn't work.

How to use it

Page 2 is the checklist, nothing more. You print it, put it next to your laptop and tick. It doesn't have 40 points because nobody ticks 40 points while running a meeting.

Page 3 is the part you rarely see written down: what to do in the four moments when a hybrid meeting really breaks down. Page 4 is what I watch for, in real time, when I facilitate, and a place to note what you observed at your own meeting.

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The 14 ticks

Across five moments. If you only get to do four things from this page, do the bold ones.

a day before — Preparation

- [ ] **A single outcome** for the 60 minutes, written in one sentence. If you can't write it, the meeting isn't ready to be held.
- [ ] Three working questions at most, in the order you will take them.
- [ ] **One preparation question** that everyone answers in writing beforehand. This is where people who don't speak easily in a group come into play.

10 minutes before — The space

- [ ] The room camera shows everyone's faces, not just yours. If those at home see a back of a head and a wall, they are already spectators.
- [ ] **A single shared document**, into which goes both what is said aloud and what is written in the chat.

minutes 0-10 — The opening

- [ ] Say in two minutes what the outcome is and how the conversation is shared between the room and online.
- [ ] **The first question goes to those at home first.** Whoever answers first sets the direction, and in a hybrid meeting that is almost always someone in the room.
- [ ] Take notes in the shared document from the first word, not from minute 30.

minutes 10-45 — The conversation

- [ ] **60-90 seconds of individual thinking** before any round. Without them, whoever reacts fastest wins, not whoever is right.
- [ ] Alternate: individual, in pairs, in plenary. Nobody stays more than 12 minutes in the same way of working.
- [ ] Restate out loud what comes from the chat and link it to the discussion in the room. Otherwise the chat is a separate room.
- [ ] Pause when the room starts talking to itself. You summarise, then reopen for those online.

minutes 45-60 — The close

- [ ] Reserve them explicitly. The last 15 minutes are the easiest to get swallowed by the discussion, and they are exactly the ones in which something gets decided.
- [ ] **In the final round, those at home speak first.** Then the decision, the owner and the deadline, written in the shared document while everyone is still there.

The four moments when it breaks

The checklist assumes things are going well. These are the situations where they aren't, and what I have learned to do in each.

Two people in the room have taken over everything

Don't cut them off, change the way of working. "Let's each write for a minute, then read in turn." A written round redistributes the space without putting anyone in the position of being stopped in public. If it repeats at the second meeting, talk to them separately, not in plenary.

Someone hasn't said a word in 40 minutes

Don't call their name so they answer on the spot, it is the fastest way to lose them completely. Give them a task with notice: "In two minutes I want to hear what each of you sees as a risk, let's start with you." The two minutes' notice completely changes what comes out.

Someone's connection drops or the sound is poor

You need a fallback decided beforehand, not improvised on the spot: whoever drops writes in the shared document and someone in the room reads out their contribution. Name the person who does this at the start. Without a name, nobody does it.

The decision is made in the corridor, after the meeting

This is the most serious and the most frequent. It is solved with a single rule, said out loud at the start: what isn't written in the shared document hasn't been decided. The first time someone comes with "we agreed yesterday in the corridor", you ask where it is written. The second time it doesn't come up again.

The best test, at the end

Compare how many contributions came from the room and how many from those at home. You don't need a tool, it is enough to look at the shared document. If the ratio is worse than the ratio between the numbers of people, the meeting was hybrid only on paper.

Four signals, in real time

These aren't ticked beforehand, they are observed while it happens. They are the only thing that tells me, at minute 20, whether the meeting is working or only seems to.

What I ask myself	What it means if the answer is always the same person
Who opens the topics?	The direction gets fixed before the others have time to think.
Who receives reactions and questions?	The others learn, in silence, that contributing isn't worth the effort.
Who interrupts without being sanctioned?	You have a hierarchy of speaking, whatever the org chart says.
Who turns the idea into a decision?	That is the person with the real status in the room. It is worth knowing who it is.

At your next hybrid meeting: what you observed

The one thing you will change next time

If you want your meetings to look different

I facilitate one-day sessions in which the team practises exactly the things on these pages, on your real meetings, not on invented examples. I work with management teams, with L&D and with large groups, in the room and hybrid.

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