

| HUMOUR |

**A**ccording to one research, 73 percent of meeting attendees admit to doing things that have nothing to do with the meeting agenda. I came upon this number while browsing dog food recipes during a meeting on improving ad placement on the news website. Was I in the presence of that 73 percent? I sent a text to my colleague across the table asking if she felt she was contributing to the meeting. I quickly received a gif of a polar bear, panda bear and a grizzly bear riding a bike. It seemed blurry after the fifth viewing. Or perhaps my vision was blurring because the room was very comfortably warm. I had not slept in the last two hours since lunch.

Office meetings are dreaded activities especially for people who have nothing to do or too much to do. How do we survive these group activities around a large, lifeless, fake wooden desk that smells faintly of spit and ammonia?

**FIND A CO-SUFFERER:**

There has to be someone else also trying to stifle a yawn. Make eye contact. Nod. Acknowledge that life is tough, meetings are tougher and we all need to keep each other awake. If the person nods back, the game is afoot. Make hand signals, cross



# A NON-BOSS LEVEL GUIDE TO SURVIVING OFFICE MEETINGS

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your arms, roll your eyes at each other. There are only two ways this can go. You make the situation so awkward that you no longer feel drowsy from the thought of social embarrassment. Or you become best work friends and add each other on messenger to share articles like this. I have successfully tried it many times to keep myself awake. When I make a successful connection this way, I will write another article.

**DOODLE:**

When no one refuses to look at you because your actions are too compromising, you doodle. Research published in 2009 found doodling while listening to a phone call allowed participants to recall 29 percent more information afterward. It prevents the mind from wandering. It gives off the impression that you are getting things done. Which is great as long as you are not drawing large genitals featuring your supervisor's facial features.

You can't draw? That's okay. Meetings involve people throwing out buzzwords as if they were free M&Ms. Grab a few of those 'synergistic alliances' and 'viral

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content' ideas and jot them down in large, squiggly, 3D fonts. It'll help you recall that info later so you can create 'engagement' with the meeting audience. It 'pivots' the boss's opinion in your favour and makes you a potential 'game-changer'.

On that same note, a friend and you can set up a game beforehand about how many buzzwords you think you will hear and count. Make a bet.

**DON'T COMPLAIN:**

If you want to get out of there, do not complain unless you have a solution. One person raising their grievance opens the floodgates to more tears from everybody. And before you know it, marketing is blaming finance for blaming accounts for leaving wet trails in the men's urinal every evening. Is it really necessary to aim from that far away?

Meetings are about going in with anxiety and coming out with added responsibility. When you complain about why something is not happening, you end up required to solve it. Keep quiet then.

**POSE THE UNANSWERABLE:**

Ask a question that no one can answer that you are really curious about. "Is it scaleable?"

"What does the market research say?"  
"Shall we discuss our yearly raise that we might finally get this year?"  
Then suggest we come back later with a solution.

**AGREE TO ADJOURN:**

In the movies, when things need to be wrapped up, they set fire to nearby objects. I would not suggest setting fire to your co-workers unless absolutely necessary. Another way to get things moving along is to nod and accept suggestions. Agreement gets people out of the door quickly till the next meeting where everybody is asked what happened in the previous meeting.