

Virtual Meeting Norms (Cotter Question Activity)

Purpose: Determine norms for virtual meetings

Outcome: 3-5 top priority norms to guide behaviors in virtual meetings

Material(s): Chart paper and markers or Google Doc

What is the “Cotter Question”?

Created by Maury Cotter, Director of the Office of Quality Improvement for the University of Wisconsin Madison, this question promotes a light-hearted but serious look into typical behaviors that can impede progress, test relationships or derail outcomes of important team meetings. It gives permission to the team to own its solution by establishing constructive behavioral expectations for itself without calling out individuals or assigning blame.

Instructions:

1. Select roles - facilitator, timekeeper, and scribe. (1 minute)
2. Each team member individually brainstorms answers to the Cotter Question: What can this team do to assure that our virtual meetings will be a disaster? (2 minutes)

3. The scribe creates and labels a T-Chart on chart paper or Google Doc. (1 minute)

Cotter Question	Meeting Norm
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-	-
-	-

4. Individual responses to the Cotter Question are recorded on the left side of the chart. (5 minutes)
5. For each listed item, the team generates a reasonable meeting norm to avoid the disaster. (10 minutes)
6. The team then selects* the 3-5 meeting norms it would like to use at all of its meetings. (5 minutes)
7. The top 3-5 norms are posted and reviewed at the beginning of each meeting. (1 minute)

* To narrow a long list of norms to just 3-5, consider using a multi-voting process. Refer to *The Handbook for SMART School Teams Second Edition*, pages 118-119.