

## Outlook Calendar – Do's and Don'ts

Have you ever heard someone say, "We are meeting at 3:30 today? I never saw the meeting request!"? Whether you schedule or attend a meeting, you can help it run smoothly and on time with the following meeting request do's and don'ts:

- **Make a choice** Accept, accept as tentative, or decline each meeting request that you receive, especially if it is an update to a meeting request that you previously accepted. By making a choice, you keep the meeting organiser apprised of your decision and you prevent the meetings that you want to attend from being accidentally deleted. If you **need to attend a meeting but can't at the time it is scheduled**, [you can propose a new time for the meeting](#).  
Try not to delete a meeting request outright because this is one way that meetings get "lost."
- **Send updates** After modifying one of your own meeting requests, remember to click **Send Update** to send the updated request to all recipients.
- **Cancel a single meeting** If you need to cancel a meeting, it is considerate to notify the people you invited. Delete the meeting from your calendar, click **Send cancellation and delete meeting**, and then send the cancellation to everyone you invited.
- **Cancel recurring meeting** If you, as the meeting organiser, are ending a recurring series of meetings, open the meeting on your calendar, set a new end date, and then send an update. This keeps the past meetings on everyone's calendars, but future occurrences after the end date are removed.
- **Change meeting organisers** If a recurring meeting is changing to a new organiser, there is not a way to reassign the ownership of the meeting. The original organiser should send an update with a new end date — the past meetings remain on everyone's calendars, but future occurrences after the end date are removed. The new meeting organiser should send a new meeting request for meetings in the future.

- **Keep meetings from vanishing** If you run Outlook on two computers and accept a meeting while using one of them; don't delete the meeting request from the Inbox on the other computer. If the request is still there, accept it again. Deleting a request on one computer after accepting it on another computer can cause the meeting to disappear from your calendar.
- **Process meeting requests and updates from the Inbox** Always accept or decline a meeting request from your Inbox. Yes, Outlook allows you to accept or decline a meeting from its time slot on your calendar, but that can leave the meeting request in your Inbox. Leaving the meeting request in your Inbox might confuse you later and definitely leaves any delegates (**delegate: Someone granted permission to open another person's folders, create items, and respond to requests for that person. The person granting delegate permission determines the folders the delegate can access and the changes the delegate can make.**) you appointed wondering about whether the meeting was accepted.
- **Keep your meeting notes separate** As a meeting attendee, avoid adding your own private notes to the body of a meeting request in your calendar. If the organiser updates the meeting, your notes are lost.
- **Don't move meeting requests** Don't move a meeting request from your Inbox to a different folder before you accept or decline the request or before the meeting appears in your calendar. Soon after a meeting request arrives in your Inbox, a part of Outlook code — nicknamed the "sniffer" — automatically adds the meeting to your calendar and marks it as tentative. This is a fail-safe to keep you from missing the meeting in case you don't see the request in your Inbox. However, the sniffer doesn't reply to the meeting organiser, you still need to do that by accepting, accepting as tentative, or declining the request.  

If you or a rule that you create moves an incoming meeting request from your Inbox before the sniffer can process the request, the meeting never appears in your calendar, and you might miss the meeting.
- **May Adrienne come too?** If you receive an invitation for a meeting and believe someone else should also attend it, instead of forwarding the meeting request to that person, ask the meeting organiser to add that person to the attendee list, and then to send everyone an updated meeting request. This avoids surprising the organiser with an unexpected attendee and helps prevent lost meeting requests.

- **There is always room for one more** If you are the meeting organiser and you want to invite another person after sending the original meeting request, add the person to the attendee list (the **To** line) of the original meeting series or occurrence, and then send an update to all attendees.
- **Convert an appointment to a meeting request** If you want to create a meeting from an appointment on your calendar, open the appointment, click **Invite Attendees**, and then select the people you want to invite. This converts the appointment to a meeting request.
- **Remove it right** If you receive a meeting cancellation, click **Remove from Calendar** to remove the meeting from your calendar. Deleting the cancellation from your Inbox won't remove the meeting from your calendar.
- **Try not to change an existing attendee list** Suppose the attendee list in one of your meeting requests contains two instances of a person's name. If you delete one of the names, and then send a meeting update to the "Removed or Added Attendees," the person receives a cancellation. Similarly, if you send the meeting update to "All Attendees," the person receives both a cancellation and an update.
- **Be careful with DLs** Try to avoid sending meeting requests to distribution lists (DLs), particularly ones that you are a member of. If you need to invite all the members of a distribution list, [expand the list](#) in the **To** line before sending the request. If you need to add or remove attendees from a meeting request that you already sent to an unexpanded distribution list, don't expand the list and start adding or deleting names. Instead, cancel the meeting and create a new one.
- **Don't auto-accept requests** If you have granted one or more persons delegate access to your calendar or if you have delegate access to someone else's calendar, [turn off automatic acceptance of meeting requests](#). By turning off automatic acceptance you avoid problems with delegate workflow.
- **Avoid calendar clutter** To make people aware of your schedule, or to let them know when you plan to be away from the office, don't send a meeting request or forward appointments that block out portions of your schedule on their calendars. Instead, [share your calendar](#) with them.

If you don't want to share your calendar, you can still use a meeting request to let people know when you will be away from the office. Before you send the meeting request, set **Show time as** to **Free** so that it doesn't block out the time that you are away as Busy or Out of Office on the other people's calendars.



Coaching people to work smarter

So what if someone sends a meeting request or appointment that blocks out portions of your calendar? If you accept the item (item: An item is the basic element that holds information in Outlook (similar to a file in other programs). Items include e-mail messages, appointments, contacts, tasks, journal entries, notes, posted items, and documents.), set **Show time as** in the item to **Free**.

- **If you don't want to receive meeting request responses...** Typically, it is best to know in advance who plans to attend a meeting that you schedule. By default, Outlook meeting requests ask for a response from each person you invite. You have the option not to receive responses to your meeting request, but then you won't know who accepts, accepts as tentative, or declines it.

However, if you schedule a large meeting or an event and you don't want to receive a response from each person you invite, [turn off the Request Responses option](#) before you send the meeting request.