

## Use of the Meetings Clinic

... accessing tips for improving your meetings

### What is the Meetings Clinic?

Whatever problems you encounter in your meetings, it is almost certain that others have faced the issue before you, and that at least one person has already developed a practical tool or strategy to deal with the issue. The Meetings Clinic is a resource which enables you to quickly review those tools and strategies, based on the issue, and to identify the one which is most appropriate for your situation.

The Meetings Clinic exists in two forms:

1. A methodical form, hosted within the Inspirometer tool itself;
2. Free form resources, hosted on an open platform:  
<http://clinic.inspirometer.com>



For those with their own Inspirometer account, we recommend option 1 since it provides a more focused approach to identifying the most relevant tools and strategies, and then uses this to identify (and link) the most appropriate resources within option 2.

### Structure of the Meetings Clinic

The Meetings Clinic is broken down into 10 areas, which collectively reflect the qualities which are required to ensure an effective meeting. These are:

- Clarity of purpose/process** Ensuring a commonly understood goal and an agreed means/agenda to pursue that goal
- Attendance / participation** Ensuring the right people are engaged to fulfil the goal of the meeting, and that they efficiently contribute their skills and knowledge
- Progress since last meeting** Ensuring that actions agreed within the meeting are fulfilled in the manner that has been agreed
- Facilitation / leadership** Ensuring that people feel sufficiently guided and engaged in the process of the meeting without feeling constrained or coerced

<b>Exploring creative options</b>	Ensuring that possibilities and opportunities are not limited to established patterns and obvious solutions
<b>Use of tools &amp; techniques</b>	Ensuring that, where appropriate, best practice approaches are used to engage people's thinking and contributions
<b>Involvement / Listening</b>	Ensuring that everyone is engaged in contributing to the meeting, and feeling that those contributions are understood and appreciated
<b>Commitment to outcomes</b>	Ensuring that the conclusions of the meeting have the necessary support to ensure their efficient delivery
<b>Efficiency of time/resource</b>	Ensuring that the design and operation of the meeting is the most efficient way to utilise people's time in delivering the goals
<b>Quality of facilities/support</b>	Ensuring that the facilities and infrastructure required to conduct the meeting are a positive influence on its performance

The Clinic contains a wealth of useful, and sometimes innovative, resources which can help to ensure these requirements are fulfilled, but in many cases all that is required is that people are mindful of the need to ensure these things. They are not rocket-science, and sometimes simple well-timed questions around these areas can make a massive impact on the effectiveness of a meeting.

To assist with this, the clinic also includes a [checklist](#) based on these 10 qualities to help the organiser think through whether they have put things in place to ensure them.

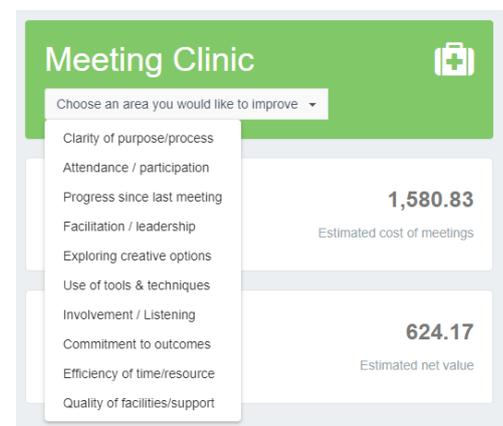
The Clinic then becomes useful when the organiser is either struggling to know how they might do these things, or is finding that their current strategies are not having sufficient impact.

## Using the Clinic from within Inspirometer

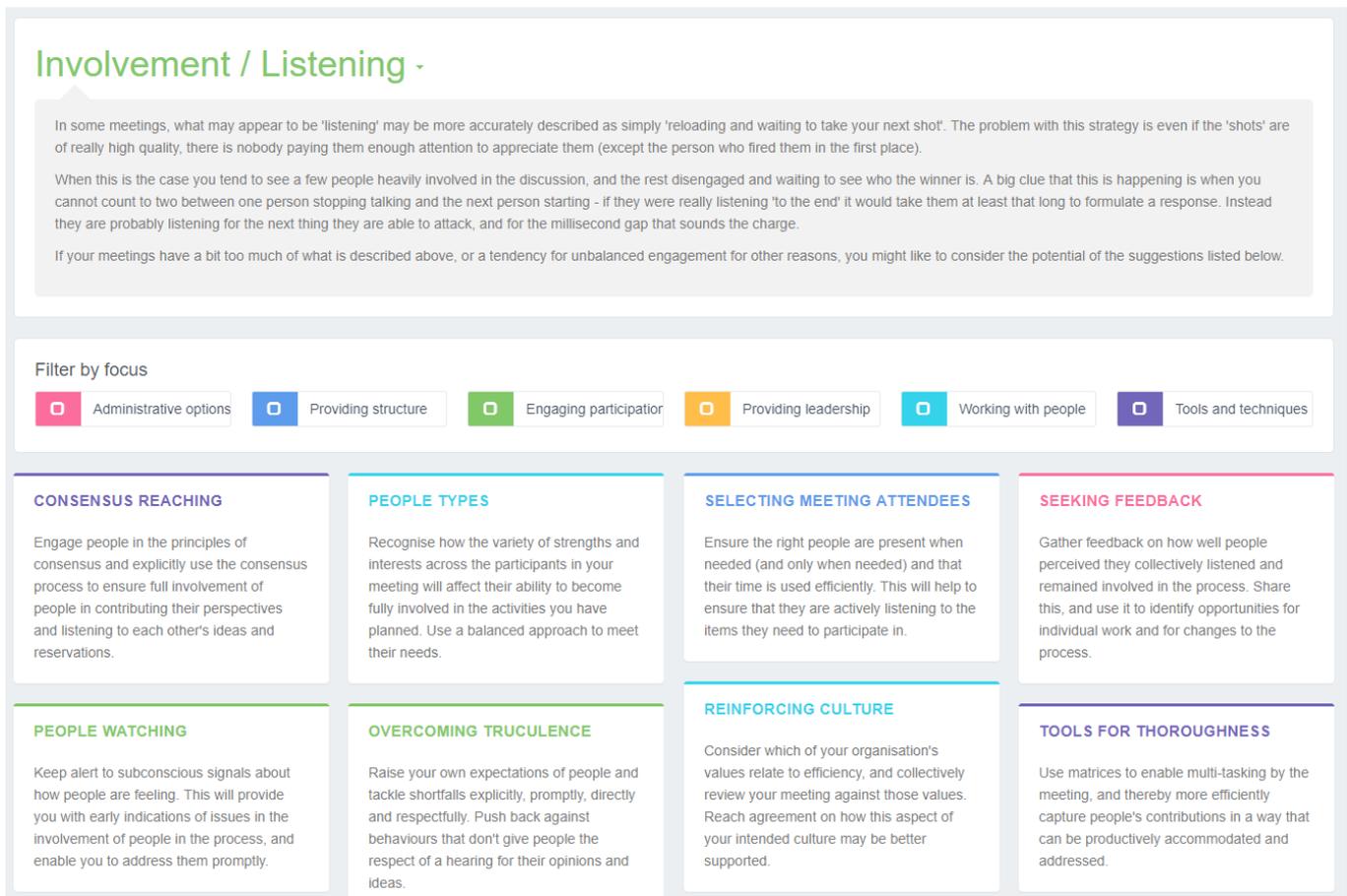
The Clinic is best accessed from the meeting stats page (Analysis > Meeting Stats) where it exists in one of two forms: A drop-down list of areas for improvement (shown on the right); or a spider diagram of those areas based on an analysis of your meeting feedback.

In either event, clicking on one of the 10 qualities presented (either on the drop-down list, or on a leg of the spider diagram) takes you to the Meetings Clinic itself, and configures the Clinic content to focus on strategies which most impact improvement of the quality selected.

The 10 qualities are described in the previous section.



When the Meetings Clinic opens on an area (say Involvement / Listening) it looks like the picture below.



**Involvement / Listening -**

In some meetings, what may appear to be 'listening' may be more accurately described as simply 'reloading and waiting to take your next shot'. The problem with this strategy is even if the 'shots' are of really high quality, there is nobody paying them enough attention to appreciate them (except the person who fired them in the first place).

When this is the case you tend to see a few people heavily involved in the discussion, and the rest disengaged and waiting to see who the winner is. A big clue that this is happening is when you cannot count to two between one person stopping talking and the next person starting - if they were really listening 'to the end' it would take them at least that long to formulate a response. Instead they are probably listening for the next thing they are able to attack, and for the millisecond gap that sounds the charge.

If your meetings have a bit too much of what is described above, or a tendency for unbalanced engagement for other reasons, you might like to consider the potential of the suggestions listed below.

**Filter by focus**

- Administrative options
- Providing structure
- Engaging participator
- Providing leadership
- Working with people
- Tools and techniques

**CONSENSUS REACHING**

Engage people in the principles of consensus and explicitly use the consensus process to ensure full involvement of people in contributing their perspectives and listening to each other's ideas and reservations.

**PEOPLE TYPES**

Recognise how the variety of strengths and interests across the participants in your meeting will affect their ability to become fully involved in the activities you have planned. Use a balanced approach to meet their needs.

**SELECTING MEETING ATTENDEES**

Ensure the right people are present when needed (and only when needed) and that their time is used efficiently. This will help to ensure that they are actively listening to the items they need to participate in.

**SEEKING FEEDBACK**

Gather feedback on how well people perceived they collectively listened and remained involved in the process. Share this, and use it to identify opportunities for individual work and for changes to the process.

**PEOPLE WATCHING**

Keep alert to subconscious signals about how people are feeling. This will provide you with early indications of issues in the involvement of people in the process, and enable you to address them promptly.

**OVERCOMING TRUCULENCE**

Raise your own expectations of people and tackle shortfalls explicitly, promptly, directly and respectfully. Push back against behaviours that don't give people the respect of a hearing for their opinions and ideas.

**REINFORCING CULTURE**

Consider which of your organisation's values relate to efficiency, and collectively review your meeting against those values. Reach agreement on how this aspect of your intended culture may be better supported.

**TOOLS FOR THOROUGHNESS**

Use matrices to enable multi-tasking by the meeting, and thereby more efficiently capture people's contributions in a way that can be productively accommodated and addressed.

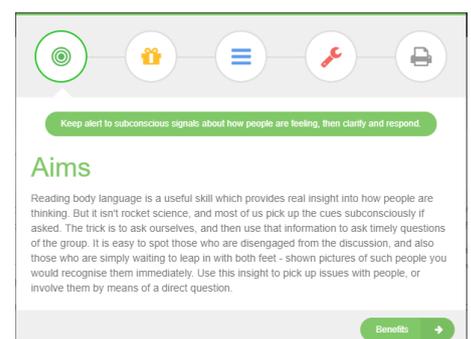
The header is actually a drop down list which enables you to move easily to other areas within the Clinic. Below this is some introductory text which explains the perspective Inspirometer is taking on this topic.

The 'Filter by focus' section enables you to look for strategies and tools which take a particular angle on improving meetings in this area:

- **Administrative options** looks at strategies that can be taken around the meeting
- **Providing structure** looks at the choices made in setting up the meeting and how it works
- **Engaging participation** looks at strategies designed to get the best out of people
- **Providing leadership** looks at strategies to do with guidance and direction
- **Working with people** looks primarily at dealing with the culture around meetings
- **Tools and techniques** looks at methods which can be adopted within the meeting

Clicking one or more of these options sets the focus for the strategies which are presented – the colours relate to the heading colour on the various boxes shown underneath.

Clicking on any of the boxes presented opens a pop-up panel which looks like the image on the right. The coloured icons on the top of the panel can be used to move between pages in the panel, and to understand (briefly and succinctly) the strategy proposed:



Keep alert to subconscious signals about how people are feeling, then clarify and respond.

**Aims**

Reading body language is a useful skill which provides real insight into how people are thinking. But it isn't rocket science, and most of us pick up the cues subconsciously if asked. The trick is to ask ourselves, and then use that information to ask timely questions of the group. It is easy to spot those who are disengaged from the discussion, and also those who are simply waiting to leap in with both feet - shown pictures of such people you would recognise them immediately. Use this insight to pick up issues with people, or involve them by means of a direct question.

Benefits →



-  Aims: What the strategy is seeking to achieve
-  Benefits: What you should seek to achieve through the strategy
-  Approach: Basic steps to take in implementing the strategy
-  Resources: Links to resources to help implement the strategy
-  Print: An option to print out the above four panels for reference

## Using the Meetings Clinic on the open platform

The Resources link, almost exclusively, to the open version of the Meetings Clinic, where it is possible to find a whole range of resources to support you in improving different areas of your meetings.

The open version of the Clinic can be found here: <http://clinic.inspirometer.com> and is essentially a blog where the strategies are included as blog posts, and people are invited to comment their own observations, experiences, and wisdom out of using the tools.

The open Clinic is best accessed through the focus provided by the Inspirometer tool, but its resources can also be accessed by means of a range of tools which can be found in the right-hand margin of the clinic (reproduced on the right of this page). There are three main mechanisms to do this:

1. Using the drop-down list under 'symptom areas' list blog items connected to the different 'qualities' of meetings we are trying to assure
2. The search box enables you to search for a tool directly
3. The word-cloud under prescription types enables you to list blog items of that nature

Each 'resource' is typically around one page long, and provides straightforward practical guidance which we hope can be implemented with the minimum of fuss.

There are masses of such resources within the clinic, but any attempts to apply them willy-nilly should be avoided. As it states clearly in the second box down in the right-hand margin shown on the previous page: [Understand your improvement goals](#). And always [track your progress](#) to confirm prescriptions are working effectively.

**Clinic Prescriptions**

Feel free to browse prescriptions using the panels below, or ... visit our [Help Pages](#) or our [Main Site](#) or return to your [Dashboard](#)

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**Use Prescriptions Responsibly ...**

[Understand your improvement goals](#)  
Always [track your progress](#) to confirm prescriptions are working effectively

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What are your symptom areas?

Select Category ▼

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Search for a prescription ...

Search ...

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Prescription types ...

actions agreement ambiguity clarity coaching  
commitment conflict consensus  
contract control **creativity** culture

## How did we do?

Please rate the usefulness of this guide to you  
All it takes is one simple click ...

