

3.3.31: Scheduling Tools

Learning Objectives

- Discuss when and how to use scheduling tools

Scheduling meetings can also be a real challenge, especially if you have people in different time zones, people who are traveling, and/or people who work different shifts. Also, if you conduct large meetings or presentations, trying to keep track of everyone's availability using pencil and paper—or worse, trying to corral people via email—can get really frustrating.

Online scheduling tools such as Doodle and Calendly allow you to make scheduling a lot easier by gathering all the information in one place and letting people enter their availability for the time slots offered. Here's how they work, in brief:

- The meeting host or leader (let's say that's you) sets up a scheduling poll. It's even easier than a SurveyMonkey poll because it's only about scheduling. You select the possible time slots based on when you are available.
- Participants receive an email with a link to the question regarding the meeting schedule.
- They then choose all the times that work for them from the ones you have offered.
- You can schedule how often you receive updates on the poll, and you can log in to check on it at any time.
- Once all the participants have responded, you receive an email with a summary of their responses.
- You then choose the best time for the meeting based on their answers.
- You can have the software send meeting invitations with the time you chose and any other relevant text.
- Depending on individual settings, the software can populate each person's calendar with the meeting information.

These applications will also let you schedule a bunch of one-on-one meetings, like performance reviews, for example. We'll talk about that, too, in the next section.

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