

The Meeting Cost Cutter

From the COO Seat — The Free Vault · Vault 004 · Version 1.0 · August 2026

Every recurring meeting was somebody's good idea once. Most stopped earning their keep months ago and nobody has said so out loud. Thirty minutes with this sheet buys back two to five hours a week.

Step 1 — List them (10 minutes)

Every recurring meeting on your calendar and your team's: name, attendees, frequency, length. Pull from the calendar, not memory — memory protects the guilty.

Step 2 — Price them (5 minutes)

Rough loaded cost per attendee: **\$75/hour** is close enough for most teams (salary × 1.5-ish, don't overthink it). Weekly cost = attendees × hours × rate × 4.3.

A "quick sync" with 8 people is a four-figure monthly line item. Write the numbers down. Numbers change conversations that vibes can't.

Step 3 — Apply the three-rule test (10 minutes)

For each meeting, one verdict:

KEEP — it produces a decision or an artifact that couldn't exist without it, and the right people are in the room. (Status meetings are almost never this.)

SHORTEN — it produces something, but takes 60 minutes to produce 15 minutes of it. Cut the length in half and see who notices. Nobody has ever noticed.

KILL — no named decision-maker, no artifact, or "this could be a Loom and a doc." Kill it. You can always resurrect a dead meeting; you can't resurrect the hours.

Step 4 — Send the note (5 minutes)

The script that kills a meeting without killing morale:

"We're cutting the [NAME] meeting as part of a calendar reset — it's not pulling its weight against everyone's time, and that's on the format, not the people. Decisions that used to happen there now happen in [CHANNEL], with [PERSON] as the tiebreaker. If you find you miss it, tell me — resurrection is always on the table."

Three rules inside that note: it blames the format, replaces the function (not just the meeting), and leaves a human tiebreaker. Meetings die without those three; with them, nobody grieves.

The upkeep

Run this quarterly — meetings breed. And when someone new asks to “add a quick weekly,” the answer is: “What decision does it produce?” If they can name it, thirty minutes. If they can’t, there’s your answer.

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