

Meeting

Mastery

Syllabus



Wicked Problem Solving™

Welcome to Meeting Mastery

Meeting Mastery is a practical system for designing and leading meetings that produce clearer thinking, better decisions, and stronger follow-through. At the heart is a fundamental shift:

Stop thinking of meetings as a list of agenda items to talk through. Start designing them as a sequence of collaborative activities that help your teams get important work done.

Using the Wicked Problem Solving (WPS) system, you will learn to turn meetings into purposeful collaborative working sessions.:

- **Run Plays**, concise structured activities, that make people's thinking visible.
- Combine Plays into **Meeting Maps** for team, project, client, and change meetings.
- Use the **Meeting Game Plan** to Decide, Define, Design, Direct, and Deploy meetings from beginning to follow-through.
- Apply the **Meeting Compass** to read the room and adjust in real time.
- Build the **facilitation skills** to lead groups with greater clarity, engagement, and confidence.

You'll practice the tools as you learn them and leave with visual methods you can put to work immediately. The goal is not simply to run smoother meetings. It is to help your teams think better together and accomplish work they could not accomplish alone.



What's Included



90-minute self-paced video course
12 modules | 33 video lessons



WPS Meeting Mastery Operating Playbook 300+ illustrated pages



12 WPS Foundation Plays
Structured visual activities for deeper collaborative work



12 WPS Meeting Maps
Team, Project, Client, Change



Digital toolkit
Templates and tools for making team thinking visible



Eligible for professional development
and training budgets



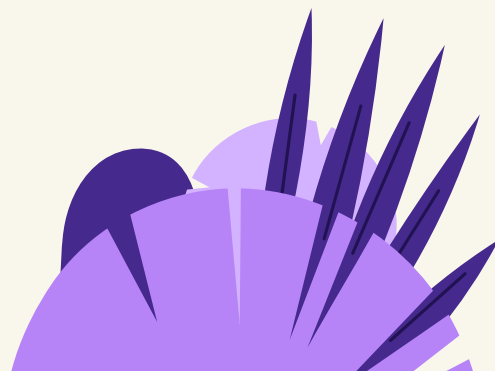
WPS Meeting Mastery
Course completion certificate



Six-month course
access

Table of Contents

Module	Topic	Page
01	Welcome to Meeting Mastery	8
02	The Foundational Method	9
03	Meeting Mindset	10
04	Meeting Game Plan	11
05	Meeting Plays	12
06	The Meeting Map	13
07	Team Meetings	14
08	Project Meetings	15
09	Client Meetings	16
10	Change Meetings	17
11	Meeting Fluency	18
12	Go Forth	19
	WPS Plays Reference	20
	Meeting Maps Reference	21



WPS Meetings Overview

Module	Lesson	Description	Assignment
01	Welcome to Meeting Mastery	Discover why meetings matter, why so many underperform, and what changes when you begin treating them as strategic tools for getting important work done together.	Think about the meetings you hold and get ready for a new visual way of working
02	The Foundational WPS Method	Learn the building blocks of Wicked Problem Solving: Plays, Meeting Maps, and the Meeting Game Plan.	Take a real meeting challenge and identify the question, visual structure, and task that could help the group work on it together.
03	The Meeting Mindset	Before changing how you run meetings, examine how you enter them. Surface the beliefs, assumptions, and habits that shape how you lead and participate in group work.	Explore four core capabilities for becoming a more effective meeting leader: Lead. Connect. Elevate. Map.
04	The Meeting Game Plan	Great meetings begin before anyone enters the room and continue after everyone leaves. Learn the five-step Meeting Game Plan: Decide, Define, Design, Direct, Deploy.	Understand the full lifecycle of meetings, from determining if a meeting is necessary to ensuring you have an action plan.
05	Plays	Plays are the fundamental units of collaborative work in Wicked Problem Solving. Each consists of a key question, tasks for people to perform, and a visual workspace to make collective thinking visible.	Explore the 12 core WPS Plays and learn how each creates a different pattern of thinking, participation, and decision-making.
06	The Meeting Map	Sequenced together, Plays become a system for getting work done. Learn to build Meeting Maps—visual blueprints that connect Plays into a purposeful flow from beginning to end.	Understand the universal Open–Middle–Close structure along with the Push/Pull and Front Channel/Back Channel.
07	Team Meetings	Team meetings establish the rhythm of how people work together. Learn Meeting Maps for three essential team meeting types: Kickoff, Broadcast, and Update.	Work through a Team Kickoff in detail, seeing how individual Plays connect to create a complete meeting experience.

WPS Meetings Overview

Module	Lesson	Description	Assignment
08	Project Meetings	Projects depend on coordinated action across people, roles, timelines, and dependencies. Learn how to design Project Kickoff, Planning, and Tracking meetings.	Build a complete Project Planning Meeting Map, Play by Play.
09	Client Meetings	Every client meeting has two outcomes: the work you accomplish and the relationship you build. Learn Meeting Maps for Introduction, Discovery, and Pitch meetings.	Work through a complete Client Discovery Meeting Map.
10	Change Meetings	Some meetings require a group to think differently. Learn how to design and lead Idea Generation, Problem Solving, and Decision Making meetings.	Build an Idea Generation Meeting Map to separate divergent and convergent thinking and broaden participation.
11	Meeting Fluency	Learn how to master meetings from simple deliberate practice into fluency.	A real-world case study shows how small changes in meeting design can create significant shifts in how teams work together.
12	Go Forth	Meeting Mastery becomes valuable when you use it. Choose a real meeting, and put the system into action. Start with one Meeting Map, run the Plays, observe what changes, and continue building your skill through practice.	The goal is to make your next meeting better than your last one—and keep going.

Learning Objectives

Meeting Mastery is a practical system for designing and leading meetings that produce clearer thinking, stronger decisions, and sustained action. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

01

Explain the WPS approach to better meetings

Describe how key questions, visual thinking, and clear tasks work together in a WPS Play, and explain how Plays, Meeting Maps, and the Meeting Game Plan form an integrated system for designing and running meetings.

02

Determine when and why to hold a meeting

Evaluate whether live collaboration is necessary, define the specific job the meeting must accomplish, identify the appropriate participants, and select the meeting type that best fits the desired outcome.

03

Design purposeful meetings using the Meeting Game Plan

Apply the five stages — Decide, Define, Design, Direct, and Deploy — to plan the complete meeting lifecycle, from the initial need to meet through follow-through and action.

04

Build and adapt Meeting Maps using WPS Plays

Select, sequence, and adapt Plays across the Open, Middle, and Close of a meeting, matching the question, visual structure, task, timing, and expected output to the work the group needs to accomplish.

05

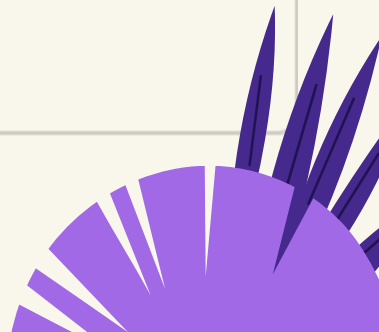
Facilitate meetings effectively in real time

Lead Plays clearly, maintain focus and momentum, engage participants, make thinking visible, and adjust the meeting as conditions change by reading the front channel and back channel and balancing Push and Pull.

06

Apply the system to common workplace meetings

Use and adapt the twelve Meeting Maps across Team, Project, Client, and Change meetings, including kickoffs, updates, planning, discovery, pitches, idea generation, problem solving, and decision making.



Introduction

Reframe meetings and get ready to transform them.

Idea	Description
What Meetings are for	Tom opens the course with a fundamental reframe: meetings are not agenda items to survive. They are tools for helping people think together, make choices, coordinate action, and accomplish work that requires live interaction.
The World of Meetings Today	See why meetings consume so much organizational time and why so many fail to repay that investment. Examine the recurring breakdowns: unclear purpose, weak structure, invisible thinking, low engagement, and poor follow-through.
What Makes a Great Meeting	Explore the qualities effective meetings share: clear purpose, strong structure, visible thinking, engagement by design, psychological safety, and clear outcomes. These become practical design requirements for the course.
The WPS Method: An Introduction	Meet the core system: focused questions, visible thinking, and purposeful tasks organized into Plays, Meeting Maps, and the Meeting Game Plan. See how WPS turns conversation into collaborative work.
Tool Up	Prepare the simple physical and digital tools you will use throughout the course: sticky notes, markers, shared surfaces, templates, and a visual collaboration platform when working remotely.
The Meetings You Will Learn to Run	Meeting Mastery focuses on twelve common meetings where stronger design can produce an immediate difference. They are organized into four families: Team, Project, Client, and Change.



**Team
Meetings**



**Project
Meetings**



**Client
Meetings**



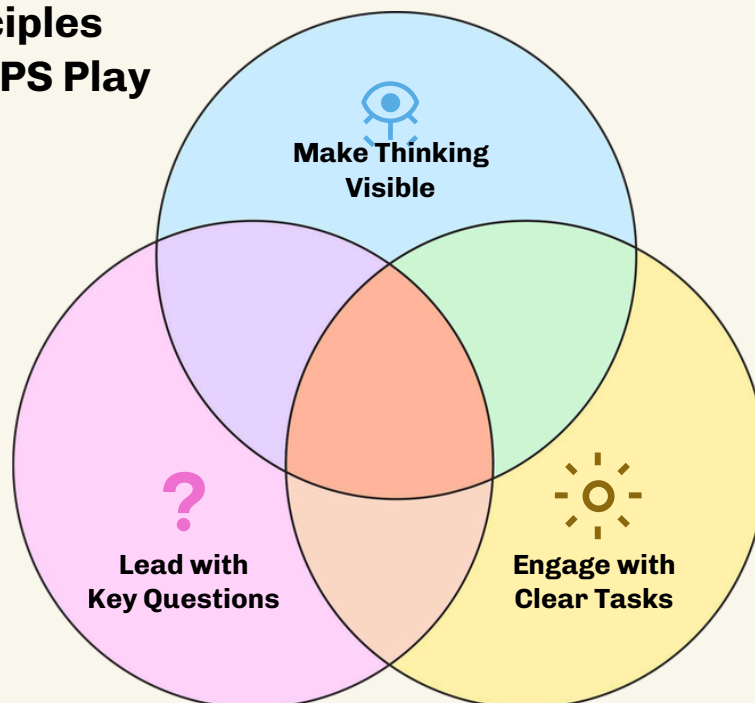
**Change
Meetings**

The Foundational Method

Learn the building blocks, then put them to work.

Idea	Description
What a Play Is	Learn the core unit of WPS: a short, structured activity that combines a focused question, a visual structure, and a clear task. A Play gives people something specific to do and produces visible output the group can use.
Run Your First Plays: Post Up and Cluster	Go directly into practice. Use Post Up to surface independent thinking, then Cluster to discover patterns and meaning. Experience how quickly a group can move from scattered ideas to a shared picture.
Why Plays Work: The Cognitive Science	Explore why externalizing ideas reduces cognitive load, improves shared attention, and allows people to compare, organize, test, and build on one another's thinking.
Questions, Visuals, and Tasks	Go deeper into the three elements of a Play. Learn how a sharp question focuses attention, a visual structure gives thinking useful form, and a task converts participation into action.
From One Play to a System	See how individual Plays connect. The output of one Play becomes the input for the next, Meeting Maps create the flow, and the Meeting Game Plan supports the entire meeting lifecycle.

The Three Principles Behind Every WPS Play



Meeting Mindset

See what is really happening—and lead from there.

Idea	Description
Your Internal Operating System	Your assumptions about meetings shape what you notice and how you respond. Learn to move from passive participant or agenda manager to designer and guide of collaborative work.
Reflecting on Your Assumptions	Examine the habits and expectations you bring into meetings. Identify the beliefs that help you lead well and the ones that produce over-control, avoidance, drift, or disengagement.
Front Channel and Back Channel	Every meeting operates on two channels. The Front Channel is the visible work: purpose, questions, activities, time, decisions, and outputs. The Back Channel is the human experience: attention, trust, participation, confidence, energy, and tension.
Four Responsibilities: Lead, Connect, Elevate, Map	Turn mindset into observable practice through four responsibilities you can learn and strengthen over time.

Lead

Hold the direction

Keep the purpose, outcome, time, and next move clear. Protect focus without taking ownership of the group's thinking.

Connect

Attend to the Back Channel

Notice participation, trust, energy, hesitation, and tension. Create conditions for useful candour and contribution.

Elevate

Raise the quality of thinking

Challenge assumptions, test easy agreement, reframe weak questions, and help the group move beyond first answers.

Map

Make the work visible

Capture and structure the group's thinking so people can see patterns, gaps, decisions, and what still needs attention.

The Meeting Game Plan

Design the whole meeting, not just the hour in the room.

Idea

Description

The Five D's: A Complete System

Learn the Meeting Game Plan as a five-stage discipline: Decide, Define, Design, Direct, and Deploy. Each stage resolves a different uncertainty and prepares for the next.

01. Decide: Do You Actually Need to Meet?

Determine whether real-time interaction is worth everyone's time. Clarify the outcome, ask why live collaboration is needed, and invite only the people essential to the work.

02. Define: What Job Must the Meeting Perform?

Turn a broad topic into an observable finish line. Define what the group must produce: a decision, plan, set of options, shared understanding, priority, or commitment.

03. Design: Build the Path

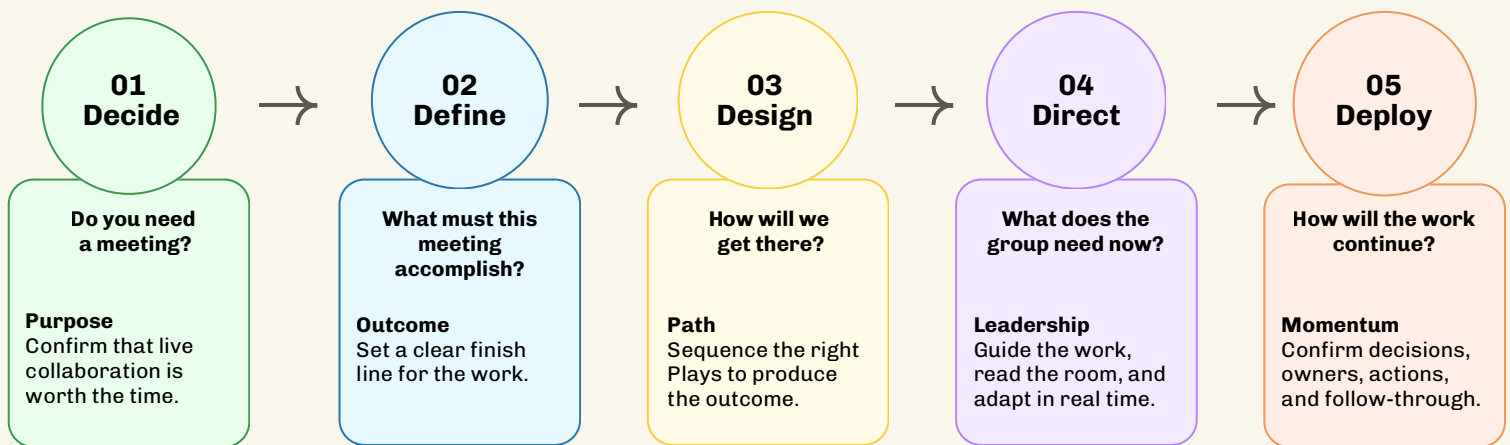
Choose the Meeting Map and Plays that will move the group from its opening question to the intended outcome. Match questions, visuals, tasks, timing, and transitions to the work.

04. Direct: Lead in Real Time

Treat the design as a working hypothesis. Read both channels, maintain the outcome, and use the smallest useful intervention to restore focus, participation, or progress.

05. Deploy: Move the Work into Action

Confirm decisions, actions, owners, unresolved questions, and next checkpoints. Share the visible record where the work continues and follow through.



**The Meeting Game Plan connects the reason to meet
with the action that follows.**

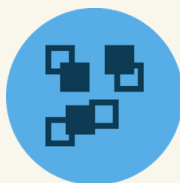
Meeting Plays

Run Plays in real meetings—physically and virtually.

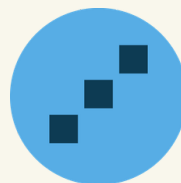
Idea	Description
The Anatomy of a Play	Revisit the Play framework in depth and learn the twelve Foundation Plays: Post Up, Cluster, Sort, Vote, Line, Swimlane, Grid, Poster, 2x2 Matrix, Leap, Systems Map, and Canvas.
The Play Library	Learn what each Play is designed to produce: ideas, patterns, priorities, comparisons, sequences, models, decisions, plans, or commitments. The real skill is recognizing what kind of thinking the work needs next.
Set Up the Room	Arrange the physical or digital environment so people can see the question, reach the shared workspace, contribute easily, and understand where their work belongs.
The Six-Step Launch	Introduce a Play clearly: mark the transition, state the purpose, ask the key question, explain the task and visual structure, demonstrate and check, then start the work and step back.
Virtual Facilitation	Adapt WPS to online and hybrid meetings. Use visible instructions, clear timing, shared digital workspaces, equal access to participation, and deliberate transitions to keep the work coherent.



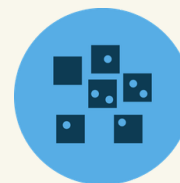
Post Up



Cluster



Sort



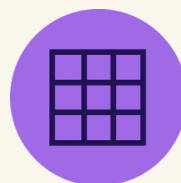
Vote



Line



Swimlane



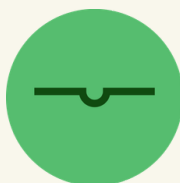
Grid



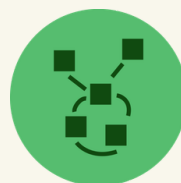
Poster



2x2 Matrix



Leap



Systems Map



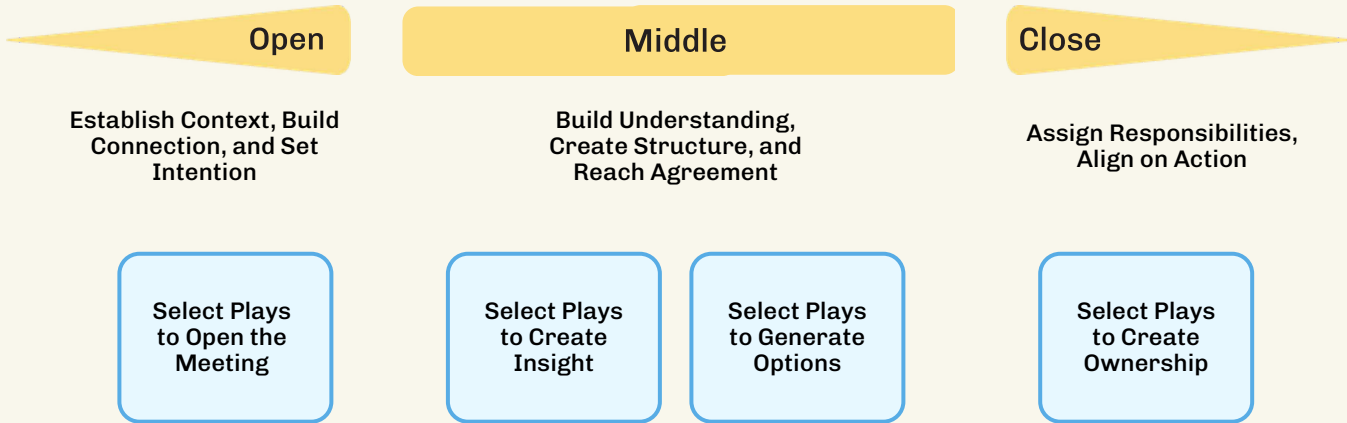
Canvas

Meeting Maps

Sequence Plays into a meeting that moves the work forward.

Idea	Description
What a Meeting Map Does	A Meeting Map is the visual blueprint for what happens inside the meeting. It connects Plays into a purposeful sequence and helps the leader test the flow before the session begins.
Open, Middle, Close	Learn the universal three-part structure. The Open establishes context, connection, and intention. The Middle does the deeper work. The Close confirms decisions, ownership, and what happens next.
How Plays Live Inside Maps	Different phases call for different kinds of Plays. Use the Open to orient and engage, the Middle to explore, organize, compare, and decide, and the Close to commit and carry the work forward.
The Meeting Compass	A Map provides structure. The Meeting Compass helps you navigate it in real time across four dimensions: Front Channel — the visible work. Back Channel — the experience of the group. Push — add direction. Pull — create space.
Four Ways to Use a Meeting Map	Use a Meeting Map to design the session before it begins, guide participants through the work, navigate when conditions change, and provide a visible record of the meeting's progression.

Universal Structure of Meetings

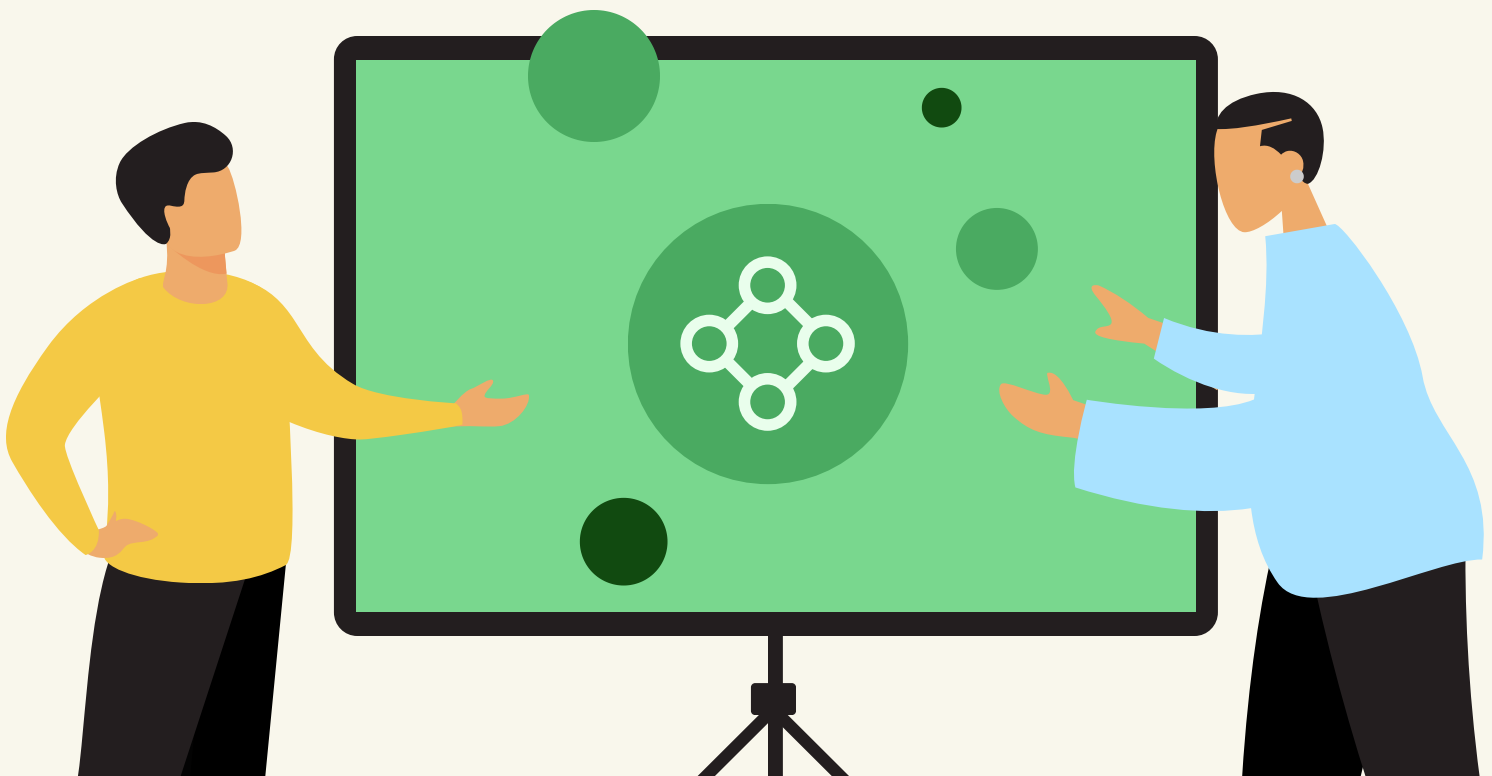




Team Meetings

Build the rhythm that keeps teams aligned.

Idea	Description
Team Meetings Overview	Team meetings establish how a group communicates, coordinates, and works together over time. Learn three recurring meeting types and the distinct job each one performs.
Team Kickoff	Bring a new or re-formed team into alignment on purpose, priorities, roles, ways of working, and measures of success. Build trust by making expectations and responsibilities visible from the start.
Team Broadcast	Share important information with a larger group, explain why it matters, and create a common sense of direction. Design the flow so people can understand, absorb, question, and act on the message.
Team Update	Maintain momentum through a short, structured review that makes progress, priorities, blockers, decisions, and next actions visible. Keep the meeting focused on coordination, not status theatre.
Remote and Distributed Teams	Adapt all three maps for virtual and hybrid work. Use shared visual workspaces, explicit participation patterns, clear transitions, and balanced Push and Pull to keep distributed teams engaged.





Project Meetings

Turn plans into coordinated execution.

Idea	Description
Project Meetings Overview	Project meetings coordinate temporary, cross-functional work where people depend on one another to deliver. Learn how good design prevents drift, hidden dependencies, unclear ownership, and recurring surprises.
Project Kickoff	Launch the project with shared understanding of the outcome, scope, roles, measures of success, ways of working, and immediate risks. Surface concerns before execution begins.
Project Planning	Turn an objective into an executable plan. Make deliverables, responsibilities, dependencies, timing, resources, and risks visible so the team can see how the work fits together.
Project Tracking	Review progress against the plan, surface risks early, resolve blockers, and adjust the work needed to stay on course. Focus on exceptions and decisions rather than reading out status updates.

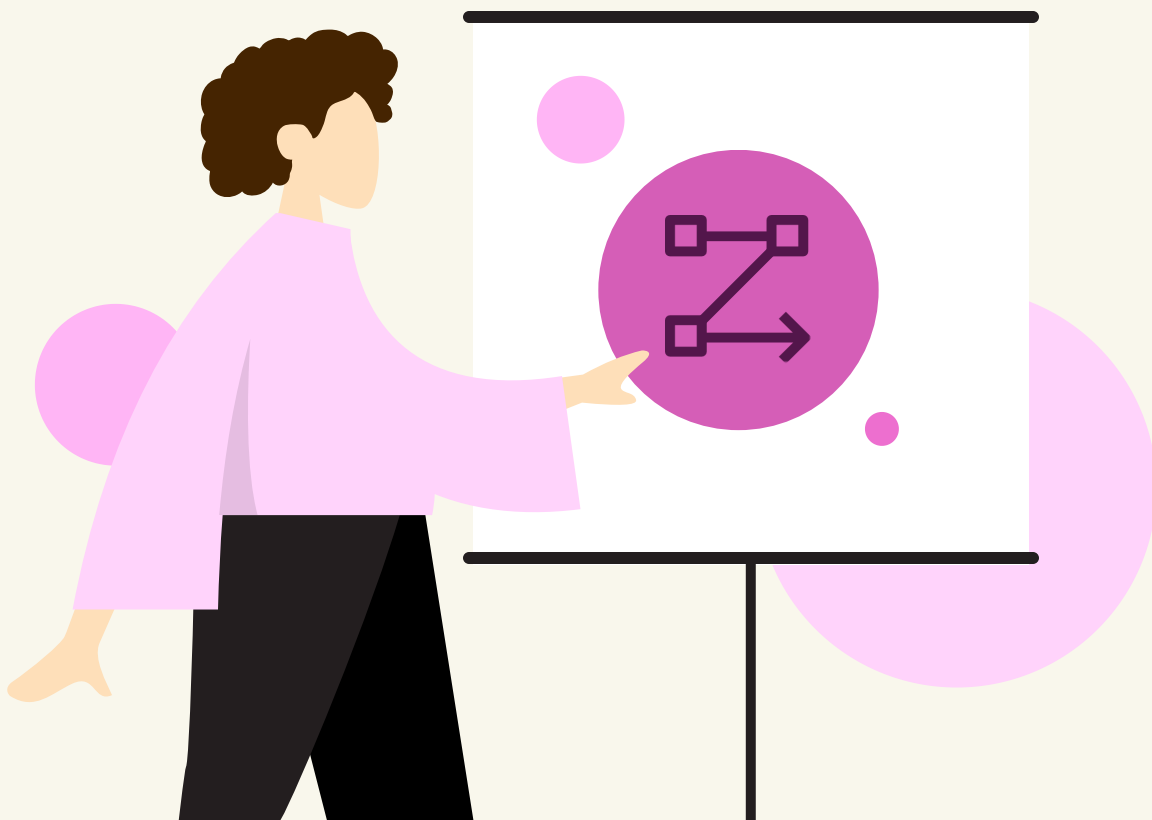




Client Meetings

Build trust and create shared understanding across organizations.

Idea	Description
Client Meetings Overview	Client meetings have two simultaneous jobs: advance the work and strengthen the relationship. Learn how credibility, curiosity, listening, visible thinking, and clear next steps work together.
Client Introduction	Create the conditions for a productive relationship. Establish trust, understand the immediate context, align expectations, and agree on how the relationship will move forward.
Client Discovery	Make the client's world visible. Explore their current situation, needs, constraints, stakeholders, and desired outcomes before moving toward solutions.
Client Pitch	Help a client evaluate a recommendation by connecting it directly to their needs, presenting credible evidence, making trade-offs clear, and defining the decision and next step.





Change Meetings

Guide groups through uncertainty with structure and momentum.

Idea	Description
Change Meetings Overview	Some meetings require people to think differently, not simply coordinate existing work. Learn three meeting types for generating possibilities, solving difficult problems, and making consequential choices.
Idea Generation	Move beyond predictable answers. Separate divergent and convergent thinking, widen participation, challenge familiar assumptions, generate a rich field of possibilities, and identify ideas worth developing.
Problem Solving	Turn a tangled situation into a shared understanding of the problem and a practical path forward. Diagnose before prescribing, distinguish causes from symptoms, and test possible interventions.
Decision Making	Move from competing options and uncertain trade-offs to a well-reasoned choice the group can support and act on. Make criteria, evidence, disagreement, and consequences visible before committing.



Meeting Fluency

Close the gap between knowing the system and using it.

Idea	Description
The Complete WPS System, Revisited	Bring the system back together: WPS principles, Plays, Meeting Maps, the Meeting Game Plan, the Meeting Compass, and the four responsibilities of Lead, Connect, Elevate, and Map.
How Mastery Develops	Meeting mastery grows through deliberate practice. Early on, you follow the structure closely. With repetition, you build range and confidence. Eventually, you adapt Plays and Maps in real time according to what the work and the group require.
The Meeting Field Guide	Learn practical responses to common meeting breakdowns: drift, confusion, dominance, silence, weak thinking, low energy, time pressure, disagreement, and unclear decisions.
Case Study: Redesigning Meetings Under Real Constraints	See how a team can improve recurring meetings by changing the design of the work, making thinking visible, clarifying decisions, and reducing unnecessary meeting time.
Your Next Step	Mastery begins with one real meeting, one Map, and one intentional Play. Repeat what works, reflect on what does not, and build a wider repertoire through experience.



Go Forth

Put the system to work and keep developing your practice.

Idea	Description
The WPS System at a Glance	Review the complete architecture on one page: the WPS principles, Foundation Plays, Meeting Maps, Meeting Game Plan, Meeting Compass, and leadership responsibilities.
How WPS Is Designed to Help Professionals Learn	See how the course combines explanation, visual models, demonstration, practice, reflection, and real-world application so the method becomes usable rather than merely understood.
The Research Foundation	Review the bodies of research that inform the method, including visual cognition, cognitive load, psychological safety, participation, decision quality, collaboration, and deliberate practice.
Core WPS Components Index	Use a compact reference to quickly locate the Plays, meeting families, Game Plan stages, Map phases, and leadership tools you need when designing or running a meeting.
Continue Your Practice	Meeting Mastery is not something you finish. It becomes a way of working. Keep choosing real meetings, applying the system, noticing what happens, and improving one thing at a time. Over time, the method should become less visible as your judgment becomes more fluent.
The Practice Is Simple	Make your next meeting better than your last one—and keep going.



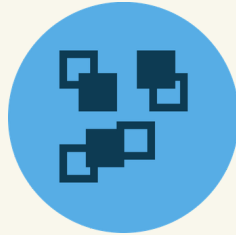
Essential Plays

Twelve Foundation Plays for collaborative work



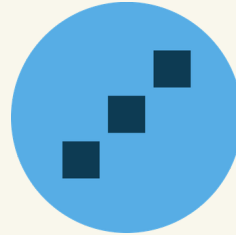
Post Up

Generate and capture individual contributions as moveable objects.



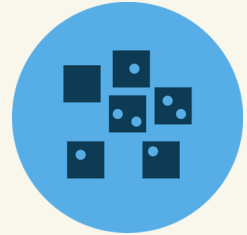
Cluster

Discover themes by grouping material without predetermined categories.



Sort

Place material into predetermined categories or an explicit order.



Vote

Make judgments visible; use the result to inform a decision, not make one.



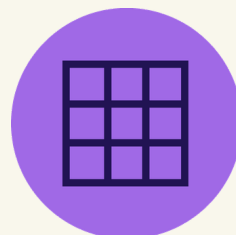
Line

Position material along a spectrum, sequence, or timeline.



Swimlane

Map work across roles or streams to reveal sequence, ownership, and handoffs.



Grid

Compare material systematically across several categories or fields.



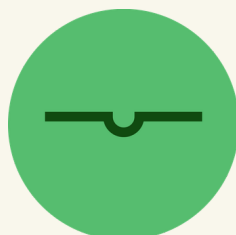
Poster

Synthesize a topic into a clear, coherent message for a group or other audience.



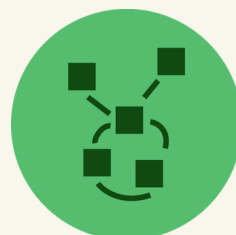
2x2 Matrix

Compare items across two dimensions and examine the pattern or trade-offs.



Leap

Define the move from current to a desired state and identify what must bridge the gap.



Systems Map

Reveal relationships, dependencies, influence, and feedback within a system.



Canvas

Work through a complete model, territory by territory, so the parts stay connected.

Essential Meeting Maps

Twelve Meeting Maps for Team, Project, Client, and Change work



Team Meetings

Make a team's purpose, responsibilities, decisions, actions, and concerns visible.

Team Kickoff

Bring a new or re-formed team into alignment on its purpose, priorities, roles, and ways of working.

Team Broadcast

Share important information with a large group, explain why it matters, and create a common sense of direction.

Team Update

Maintain momentum through regular check-ins that make progress, priorities, blockers, and next actions visible.



Project Meetings

Reduce ambiguity of the tasks that each team member is responsible for.

Project Kickoff

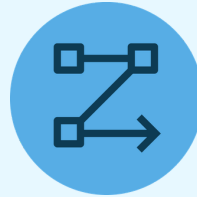
Launch a project with shared understanding of its intended outcome, scope, roles, ways of working, and measures of success.

Project Planning

Turn an objective into an executable plan by defining deliverables, dependencies, responsibilities, timing, and risks.

Project Tracking

Review progress against the plan, surface risks early, resolve blockers, and adjust the work needed to stay on course.



Client Meetings

Foster the relationship as well as the outcomes to be delivered.

Client Intro

Establish trust, understand the immediate context, align expectations, and agree on how the relationship will move forward.

Client Discovery

Understand the client's situation, needs, constraints, and desired outcomes by making their world visible and building a shared view of the challenge.

Client Pitch

Help a client evaluate a proposal by connecting it to their needs, presenting credible evidence, and clarifying the decision ahead.



Change Meetings

Imagine what could be, understand what stands in the way, and decide what happens next.

Idea Generation

Move beyond predictable thinking to a rich field of fresh possibilities, then focus on the ideas with the greatest potential.

Problem Solving

Turn a tangled, confusing situation into a shared understanding of a problem and a practical path towards solving it.

Decision Making

Move from competing options and uncertain trade-offs to a clear, well-reasoned decision the group can support and act on.



Wicked Problem Solving



“A well-designed meeting does more than save time. It helps people see clearly, think together, and leave ready to act.”

– Tom Wujec