6 solutions for a chronically late boss

An administrative assistant, Elizabeth, works for several Johnny-come-lately bosses who think nothing of showing up late for meetings.

What can she do to thwart the rude habit? Some of our Admin Pro Forum readers had solutions:

1. **Schedule buffer time between meetings.** “After every meeting I schedule for my boss, I also schedule a 30-minute buffer. It’s a precaution in case the meeting runs over. I’ve noticed an improvement in my boss’s punctuality,” says admin Brooke.

2. **Suggest canceling the meeting.** Admin Diane Johnson-Hung says after getting nowhere with other tactics, she began leaving notes for her boss after a meeting had started. “I’d wait 10 minutes from the start of the meeting, then send a note asking if we should cancel the meeting or reschedule it,” she says. “After a few times of doing that, the individual is now maybe a minute late.”

3. **Wait for the issue to catch up to him.** Making others wait could be a control issue, suggests admin Linda. One of her former bosses “actually liked having people, even his boss, wait for him. It finally caught up with him; he’s gone.”

4. **Offer more support,** if the problem is time management. Maybe the boss isn’t rude, says admin Lisa. Maybe he’s struggling with time management.

Block out chunks of time for focused work, screen out unnecessary calls and email, and prepare a realistic agenda ahead of time.

“My executive sometimes runs late because his team underestimates the time required to properly address the topic at hand,” she says. *Tip:* If an agenda item takes longer than the 10 minutes allotted, table the discussion for a follow-up meeting.

5. **Start the meeting at an odd time.** People are more likely to be punctual for a 10:03 a.m. meeting, says admin Patty.

6. **Look to leadership.** If top leaders make timeliness a priority, stragglers will change their ways, says admin Mark. When his company president ruled that all meetings would begin on time, regardless of who was present, it became rare for someone to be one or two minutes late.

“Plus, we keep minutes for all meetings,” he says, “and it was directed that, for example, ‘John Doe arrived at 10:09’ be included in the minutes.”