

A Challenging Participant...

- 1 TALKS TOO OFTEN.
- 2 TALKS TOO LONG.
- 3 TALKS TO SOMEONE ELSE AT LENGTH.
- 4 BRINGS UP PERSONAL OR IRRELEVANT ISSUES.
- 5 TALKS TOO LITTLE.
- 6 RECYCLES WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE QUESTION AT HAND.
- 7 CHALLENGES YOUR IDEAS OR OPINIONS.



1 TALKS TOO OFTEN.

Solution: Ask the rest of the group: “What does anyone else think about this point?” or “Who else has some ideas?” or “Let’s make sure everyone gets a chance to contribute before any one person speaks twice.” Or, talk to the person outside the meeting, describe their behavior and its effects in factual terms, and ask the person what the solution might be. For example, you might say: “Jack, you made some helpful points today. However, you tended to add something after each other person made a contribution. Did you notice how few others spoke? Mary and Pedro hardly said a thing. What could you do to encourage others to contribute?”

2 TALKS TOO LONG.

Solution: Wait for a pause, however brief, and interrupt, saying something like, “Could you summarize your idea in a few words so I can write it down?”

3 TALKS TO SOMEONE ELSE AT LENGTH.

Solution: Say something like, “Pardon me, Hans. We can’t hear what you and Sue are saying. Would you mind sharing it with all of us?” or “John, what are your thoughts on the point Maria just raised?”

4 BRINGS UP PERSONAL OR IRRELEVANT ISSUES.

Solution: Say something like, “Jaime, I’m not clear how that fits the issue we are talking about. Could you help me?”

5 TALKS TOO LITTLE.

Solution: Simply ask, “Yancey, what are your thoughts on this question?” or “Helen, you’re new to the group, so I think your views could be especially valuable. What do you think?”

6 RECYCLES WHAT’S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE QUESTION AT HAND.

Solution: Say something like, “Our purpose is not to go over what’s already been decided. It is to identify potential problems coming from those decisions and to work out solutions. Now, what do you see as a way to resolve the problem, Malik?”

7 CHALLENGES YOUR IDEAS OR OPINIONS.

Solution: Try one of the following:

- ▶ Cite the authorities you used as a source and acknowledge that other authorities (name them if possible) think otherwise.
- ▶ Acknowledge that the challenger’s idea or opinion has merit, and that you will need to think about the effect it has on your own thinking.
- ▶ Ask the group what they think about the challenger’s idea or opinion.

Source: ATD. 2016. “Basic Training for Trainers” TD at Work. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.