

BigLaw firm mostly goes meeting-free this week to address fatigue

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Dentons **banned** most meetings this week **for lawyers** and business professionals

It’s the second time Dentons has implemented a no-meetings week, Law.com reports. The first was the last week of December.

The pause applies to **standing meetings**, but not those tied to client and project deadlines.

“We have standing calls that are important, and particularly important in the virtual world, for connectivity, team building and culture,” McNamara told Law.com. “But we asked, ‘Can we step back from them and use that time to allow colleagues to refresh, charge batteries, switch off, and have time to feel like they can get away without **missing out on the team?**’ ”

Law.com notes that other **law firms** are also addressing fatigue. For example, Baker McKenzie offices in the United Kingdom encouraged an internal meeting ban on Wednesdays for a “Well-Being Wednesday.”

And Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe is asking its staff members and lawyers to take a week off to **“truly unplug.”** The time off will count toward **billable hours**.

I – THE SUMMARY

KEY elements = 5 / 6 key elements

Résumé ou compte rendu ?

Résumé	Compte rendu
<p>Law firm – ban standing meetings (not those related to clients or big projects) for lawyers- to allow them to truly unplug. But it comes at the expense of team building, connectivity and culture.</p>	<p>Pb = fatigue / exhaustion / big law firms / need for lawyers to take some time off</p> <p>Solution = cutting the number of standing meetings / banning standing meetings /having a week off.</p> <p>Limit = missing out on the team / some standing meetings are important though in terms of connectivity, team building...</p>

VOC = ban sthg (a ban on) – allow someone to do – take time off – adress a pb = tackle an issue.
 Additional voc = be exhausted – be overworked – be burnt out – work overtime – work long hours
 introduce a new plan, a scheme, a programme....- attend a meeting – be in a meeting -

II – THE COMMENTARY

-----→ A cosmetic measure

Not the real issue. Good in terms of communication but useless even counterproductive to address the pb of exhaustion in big law firms. What hasn't been done will have to be made up for.

The real issue= There has always been a culture of overwork and exhaustion in the law profession and more precisely a "billable hours" culture= a lot of overwork is due to the system of billable hours, where firms charge clients for each hour their lawyers work . The more hours the better (for the firm and for the lawyer)

Junior associates are expected to follow suit in order to demonstrate their commitment, esp if they want to go up the firm's associate ladder.

PB = long hours may cause mental health issues. Pregnant women are placed/put at significant disadvantage

Solution :

- change the billable hours culture. even replace it with another system= Performance could be measured by the outcome rather than billable hours
- using technology cutting a lot of drudge work.
- Time management courses for students or early career employees.