

Are Virtual Meetings Here to Stay?

BY DR. FRANK MURTHA AND BARRY GILLMAN, CFA

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The investment world, along with many other industries, has been using more virtual meetings since March 2020. Group decisions by committees and boards are central to the investment process for asset owners and managers and, for a year, many of these have been virtual. It may be that when the pandemic is finally over, some will rush to revert to past practices, with committees and boards once again meeting in person. But just as pandemic-influenced consumers have learned that online shopping may have advantages over “bricks and mortar,” it may make sense to consider whether virtual group decision-making may, in some

circumstances, be more effective and successful than in-person decisions.

Hopefully, it won't be long before we are free to choose to stay virtual or go back to our real-world meeting rooms. If there are lessons to be learned from the pandemic, we should be looking for the opportunity to apply them.

In this series of articles, we'll explore which group decisions may be better handled virtually, and which may work better in person. Drawing on the experiences and opinions of our Advisory Board and other members of the investment community, we'll look into what decision processes can be improved, and how.

We'll also examine the role of behavioral issues in comparing decision-making processes in virtual versus real-world settings. To provide insight into the psychological aspect of group behavior, we're delighted to partner with Dr. Frank Murtha in this series.

Survey: In-Person or Virtual Meeting?

To help in our research, please take our survey [here](#).
For more information on the survey, see page 2.



“I know we didn’t accomplish anything, but that’s what meetings are for.”

We will focus on these different aspects of group decision-making, delving into each in more detail in our series of articles:

- Trust
- Information slippage
- Creativity
- Power
- Behavioral traps

TAKE OUR SURVEY

If you are involved in investment group decision-making, we'd like your input. We welcome the views of committee, board and staff members of asset owners, as well as consultants and investment managers as we want the opinions of a cross-section of the community. We'll be publishing selected excerpts from the survey results in our series, while our survey participants will

receive the full report and results. If you'd be interested in participating, please go to [here](#) or contact the Brandes Institute at brandesinstitute@brandes.com. All individual survey responses are confidential, and only aggregate data will be published.

As a warm-up, ask yourself the following question:

Group decisions are most effective when (a) everyone is in the same location, (b) everyone's logged into a virtual meeting or (c) it depends, sometimes it's more effective virtually, sometimes in person.

If you answered (c) we think you'll find this series helpful. (For those responding (a) or (b), we envy your certainty!)

¹ Source: Kaamran Hafeez, The New Yorker Collection/The Cartoon Bank.

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