

# Parking Lot

## What is a Parking Lot?

A parking lot is a method used to keep track of items during meetings that are important but not directly related to the current topic.

The parking lot should be reviewed at the close of the meeting. The group can decide what topics still need attention and address them, or they can agree to discuss it after the meeting or at a later date.

## How it works

During the meeting, when a topic or idea surfaces that is not directly related to the current agenda, it is written down or noted on a designated "parking lot." At the end of the meeting, the individual leading the meeting can go review parking lot items and address any outstanding matters that were not covered.

There are a variety of options available for parking lots.

- Apps such as Trello, IdeaBoardz, Padletd, or Google Docs can be helpful for online meetings or tech-savvy service units
- Low-tech options can be just as effective – such as whiteboards, post-it notes, or a flip chart.



## Purpose

The primary goal is to maintain focus on the main topic of the meeting without losing valuable input from participants.

## Tips for Success

- ✓ Assign someone to monitor the parking lot.
- ✓ Make sure you check your parking lot and address it at every meeting, even if there isn't anything written yet. This will help build it as the group norm, and make people feel more comfortable using the parking lot.

## Benefits

- ✓ **Improved focus:** Keep meetings on track by guiding conversations and sticking to the agenda.
- ✓ **Timeliness:** With less tangents throughout the meeting, it's easier to stick to the agenda and end on time. Staying focused makes it easier to follow the agenda and end on time. If any side topics come up that don't apply to the whole group, those can be added to the parking lot and discussed after the meeting with the relevant individuals.
- ✓ **Increased Engagement:** Encourages participation by acknowledging all ideas, even if they are not immediately relevant.
- ✓ **Later Review:** Allows for a structured review of parked items at the end of the meeting or at a future meeting.

