meetings exercise

I despise poorly run meetings so much that my contract with Pfeiffer states that I do not have to go to meetings. Yet poorly run meetings don't have to happen; with small changes, meetings can be run quickly, efficiently, and well.

I have a handout in "Course Documents" on meetings that will serve as the lecture on meetings for this unit. Click on the link below to find the document and read it.

Now I want you to do a bit of math and a bit of fun. Take just your department, and figure up how many hours a week each person spends in meetings. Now estimate the hourly wage for each person; I know most of you are salaried, but you can get your approximate hourly wage if you didvide your salary by 52, and then divide that number by 40.

Multiply the number of hours each person spends in meetings by the hourly wage cost: if you spent 20 hours in meetings, and your hourly wage, for instance, is $30 per hour, the time in meetings is worth $600. Add that cost for each person to get a departmental weekly meeting cost. Now multiply that weekly meeting cost by 52.

Wait; you're not done. Now take that yearly meeting cost and multiply by .65, since experts estimate that on average 65% of all meetings are a waste of time. Now take that answer and look at it: that's the amount of money your department alone wasted on poorly run meetings.

I once did this exercise with a company who challenged its employees to use the effective meeting skills I had taught them to reduce that yearly wasted-on-poorly-run meetings figure. When one department cut its waste by 50%, the CEO subtracted the reduced cost from the original cost and then split the difference between the employees in that department as a bonus. What a wonderful motivation!