

Microspeak: ROB and Office Hours

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At a team meeting, I was introduced to yet another acronym: *ROB*. This is spelled out rather than pronounced as a word. (So maybe it's not really an acronym? Whatever.)

It was never actually stated in the meeting, presumably because the underlying assumption from the speaker was that everybody already was familiar with the term,¹ but the letters ROB stand for *Rhythm of business*. (Sometimes spelled *RoB*.)

As employed in the meeting, the *rhythm of business* referred to the cadence of various meetings. For example, "Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am to 10am is a staff meeting. Every Tuesday from 2pm to 5pm we have placemat reviews." And so on.

The calendar showing the weekly schedule is known as the *ROB Calendar*.

One item that appeared in the ROB Calendar was called *Office Hours*. This is a block of time reserved on the schedule where you can stop by to discuss whatever is on your mind. The team leaders promise to be in their offices during their Office Hours and will not schedule a meeting during this time.

Many teams also have their own Office Hours. This benefits both the team and the people who are looking for help:

1. For people outside the team, it's a time when you know that you can come by and get help. This removes the hassle of finding somebody on the team and then finding time on their schedule.
2. For people inside the team, it focuses all the distractions into a specific block of time. This means that instead of people randomly interrupting you, people interrupt you during a prearranged period of time.

Searching through Microsoft internal documents, I found some uses of ROB on its own, but I couldn't figure out what it meant. In finance circles, there were pages simply titled ROB which contained a bunch of charts showing how well things were going compared to the budget and compared to how they went last year. Not sure what that's about. Maybe someone out there can fill me in.

¹ Note that this doesn't mean that everybody in the audience was in fact familiar with the term. The speaker merely assumed that they were.

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