



No time for ping pong

Back-and-forward conversations, especially in a written form, can go forever. They involve participants and observers; become an unpleasant show, where the initial question is successfully forgotten. You may get involved into this time-waster, or even ignite it, before you realize. I confess too, at times I find hard dealing with a ping pong problem.

But here are a few early warning signs I use to recognize the beginning of a ping pong.

2 or more subjects

Either you get too many questions or ask them. Or it's the deviation from the initial subject. Unnecessary opinions and guessing. Giving too much details.

Ignored subject

Arguing, blaming, defence. In all these conversations people simply ignore each other's point. In email, ping pong arguing can go days involving whole teams and departments.

Per my opinion, there is no universal approach to handle this problem. However, asymmetric actions usually help.

If it's not important do not reply. Maybe a person on the other side just wants to have a last word.

If it's official, urgent and important - escalate.

If it's in writing, then come and talk in person, or make a call, schedule a meeting.

If it's in person, ask to enlist all points of disagreement.

Re-think and re-frame.

Either way, taking a pause helps.

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