Running Effective Meetings

Meetings have several functions. They give members a chance to discuss and evaluate goals and objectives, keep updated on current events, provide a chance to communicate, keep the group cohesive, and allow the group to pool resources for decision making. The following are some tips to help make your next meeting successful, productive, and FUN!!!

Determine the **PURPOSE** of holding an organization meeting:

- To give out general information/updates
- To receive information
- To brainstorm new ideas
- To delegate tasks
- To give or get back feedback
- To solve problems
- To make decisions

**PREPARE** for your meeting:

- Establish general logistics—Meetings should be scheduled regularly (same day, time, and place)
- Identify desired outcomes of the meeting
- Inform and prepare members for the meeting (i.e. special assignments, committee reports, expectations)
- Develop and distribute an agenda

**RUNNING THE MEETING:**

- Start promptly and end on time
- Set time limits for discussion of agenda topics and identify potentially lengthy agenda items
- Start with and stick to the agenda; Do not let people drift off into other subjects or tangents
- Don’t compete with group members. Give their ideas precedence over yours.
- Listen to everyone. Paraphrase, but don’t judge.
- Don’t put anyone on the defensive. Assume that everyone’s ideas have value.
- Control the dominant people without alienating them.
- Ensure everyone participates in the meeting and ask open ended questions to gain as much input as possible
- Before decision making takes place, summarize the situation, proposed decision, and rationale
- Realize that your interest and alertness are contagious.
- Keep all participants informed about where they are and what’s expected of them.
- Keep notes on flip charts or a board that everyone can see.
- Give others a turn at running the meeting. Those who learn to lead learn how to participate.
- Be enthusiastic and HAVE FUN!!!

**Sample Agenda for Your First Meeting**

- Introductions / Icebreaker (Collect contact info)
- Organization Overview (i.e. history, mission, traditions, programs, regular meeting time)
- Ask what roles new members would like to get involved with
- Upcoming programs
- Delegate duties, Assign Committees
- Q & A
- Give information about the next meeting & thank them for coming

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Running Effective Meetings (Continued)

**AFTER the meeting:**

- Ensure that the meeting minutes are transcribed and distributed
- Discuss any problems that occurred during the meeting with officers and advisors
- Follow up on delegation decisions
- Give recognition for excellence and progress
- Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting
- Periodically evaluate meetings and work toward improvement

**Members typically come back to future meetings when:**

1) They have something to do
2) They feel like they are important
3) They feel valued

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### Common FRUSTATIONS about Meetings

_A poll of professionals and managers resulted in 1,305 examples of problems encountered in meetings. Of these, 16 account for over 90% of all meeting problems. They are..._

- Getting Off Topic
- No Goals or Agenda
- Disorganization
- Ineffective Leadership/Lack of Control
- Wasted Time
- Ineffective Decision Making
- No Pre-Meeting Orientation
- Too Lengthy
- Poor/Inadequate Preparation
- Inconclusive
- Irrelevant Information Discussed
- Starting Late
- Interruptions
- Rambling, Redundant Discussion
- Individuals Dominate Discussion
- No Published Results or Follow-Up Action

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