

- Running Effective Meetings -

Do you dread attending meetings because they are dull, unproductive, disorganized and too long? Well, you could be suffering from “meetingitis.” But don’t worry, with proper planning and preparation, any meeting can be effective and fun.

Organizational meetings have several functions. They give members a change to discuss and evaluate goals and objectives and keep you updated on current events. They provide a change to communicate and keep the group cohesive. But, most of all, meetings allow groups to pull resources together for decision making. If the facilitator starts with a careful plan and finishes with a thorough follow-up, the meeting will “run itself.” The following are some tips to help make your next meeting successful, productive and even fun.

Before the Meeting:

Define the purpose of the meeting. If you can’t come up with a purpose, don’t have a meeting!

Club officers and advisors should develop an agenda prior to the meeting. Below is a sample agenda:

Call to Order

Minutes

Announcements

Committee Reports

Old Business

New Business

Adjournment



Distribute the agenda and circulate background material, lengthy documents or articles prior to the meeting so members will be prepared and feel involved and up-to-date.

Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it. Remember, members have other commitments. They will be more likely to attend meetings if you make them productive, predictable and as short as possible.

If possible, arrange the room so that members face each other, i.e., a circle or semi-circle or U-shaped row. A leader has a better view when he/she is centrally located.

Be sure everyone knows where and when the next meeting will be held.

During the Meeting

Greet members and make them feel welcome, even late ones when appropriate.

If possible, serve light refreshments, they are good ice breakers and make your members feel special and comfortable.

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Start on time. End on time.

Review the agenda and set priorities for the meeting.

Stick to the agenda.

Encourage group discussion to get all points of view and ideas. You will have better quality decisions as well as highly motivated members. They will feel that attending meetings is worthwhile.

Encourage feed back. Ideas, activities and commitment to the organization improve when members see their impact in the decision-making process.

Keep conversation on topic toward an eventual decision. Feel free to ask for only constructive and non-repetitive comments. Tactfully end discussions when they are getting nowhere or becoming destructive or unproductive.

Keep minutes of the meeting for future reference in case a question or problem arises.

Leader, be a role model by listening, showing interest, appreciation, and confidence in members.

Remind members of the date, time and place for next meeting.

After the Meeting

Write up and distribute minutes within 3 or 4 days.

Discuss any problems during the meeting with other officers; come up with ways improvements can be made.

Follow-up on delegating decisions. See that all members understand and carry out their responsibilities.

Give recognition and appreciation to excellent and timely progress.

Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.

Conduct a periodic evaluation of the meetings. Weak areas can be analyzed and improved for more productive meetings.

Once your organization has written its goals and objectives, it is time to take this task one step further by developing an action plan. This is the actual mapping out in detail of what is to get done within a time framework.

What is to be done—your objective?

How will it be accomplished?

What are the resources in terms of people, money, materials?

Who is responsible for completing each task?

What is the timeline for completing each task?