

Effective & Productive Meetings

Friends Support Group | October 2009

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Why do we need meetings?

Characteristics of a “Good Meeting”

Preparation Checklist

- Is it clear *why* you are meeting?
- Have the right people been invited?
- Is the meeting space adequate and pleasant?
- Agenda and Reports:

Send out 1 week prior:

- Agenda
- Financial Report
- Other suggestions:
 - Committee Reports
 - President's Report
 - Director's Report
 - Board liaison Report

Agenda

- Name of your group
- Purpose of the meeting
- A list of participants
- Start **and end** time
- A list of the presentations/topics of discussion

Tip: be sure that each person knows what will be expected of them at the meeting before they get this agenda

Meeting Leader

- Start on time
- Welcome everyone, introduce people
- Review the meeting “rules”
- Encourage participation
- Summarize key decisions and actions
- Help recorder know what to write down
- End meeting on time

Facilitation Tips

Sticking to the agenda:

- When you hear the group wandering, bring them back
- Avoid repeating info for those who are late or who haven't read the info sent to them prior to the meeting
- If issues arise during the meeting, put them in the “parking lot”
- Bring closure to discussions

Move to Action

- A goal should be to challenge members to take action
- On the agenda identify:
 - “action items”
 - “items for discussion”
- Everyone should leave the meeting with something to do

Problem Behavior in Meetings

Problem	Behavior	Suggested Solution
Broken Record	Brings up the same point over and over again.	Write the Broken Record's concern on a flip chart and post it to provide assurance that the concern has been heard and will be addressed.
Whisperer	Members having private conversations.	Make eye contact with the speakers. Pause briefly until you have their attention and then begin to speak again.
Dropout	Nonparticipant	Try asking Dropout's opinion during meeting or at break.
Loudmouth	Must be center of attention; talks constantly	Acknowledge Loudmouths when they begin to talk and let them have their say. Then, if Loudmouths interrupt others, remind them that they have had their say.

See handout for solutions for: Latecomer, Early Leaver, Clown, Doubting Thomas, Whisperer, Attacker, Interpreter, Know-it-All, Teacher's Pet

Meeting Recorder

- Needs ability to listen and summarize accurately without evaluating
- Minutes should at least record motions/decisions
- Minutes are not a transcription
- Minutes record the legal decisions and are reviewed as a part of an audit

Ending the Meeting

- Clear, actionable steps
- Review who will do what before the next meeting
- Thank people for their time
- Remind them of the next meeting date

After the Meeting

- Follow-up email with:
 - Accomplishments
 - Summary of action items, assignments and due dates
 - Deadline for reports, agenda items for the next meeting
 - Date of next meeting and any important dates to remember between now and then
- Call anyone who couldn't make the meeting to make sure they are in the loop for next time.

Meeting Follow-Up

- Make sure your note-taker prepares the meeting notes soon after the meeting.
- Before the next meeting, officers of the board should assure that tasks assigned are progressing/accomplished
- A copy of the meeting minutes should be archived in an organizational notebook or file.

Making Meetings Fun

- Food
- Smiles
- Camaraderie
- Respect Everyone, Respect their time
- Do something out of the ordinary occasionally