



## Running an Effective Meeting

Effective meetings provide communication and structure for an organization. Organizations get together to discuss goals and progress toward their goals, to work through problems, to make decisions, to give support to fellow members who need it and just to be together as a whole to share in the fellowship of the organization.

Meetings vary greatly from group to group depending on the number of members, the mission of the organization, and activity level of the group. Despite the differences in organizations, there are some basic tips to help meetings run more smoothly and keep members coming back.

- Have concrete goals for each meeting. Set an agenda and ask for additions or changes at the beginning of each meeting.
- Make sure all members are aware in advance of the meeting day, time, and place. You might use mailings, phone calls, postings or e-mail to keep in touch. E-mail the agenda as a reminder.
- Always start meetings on time! This will prove to the other members that you know how valuable their time is. You will receive a lot of positive reinforcement for your consideration, as well as help others to be on time.
- Prepare an agenda. Type the agenda and have enough copies for every member. This will also keep structure to your meeting. Here is a skeletal outline of a basic agenda:
  - Attendance
  - Review of last week's minutes
  - Announcements/Correspondence
  - Executive Board/Committee Reports
  - Old Business
  - New Business
  - Responsibility Sign-Up
  - Comments, Questions, Concerns
  - Time to Socialize
- Have a process for group decision-making that is consistently used. In a larger group, it would be easier to have a show of hands, while a smaller group may always seek to reach consensus.

- Keep track of the discussion and decisions made at meetings. Have a secretary or individual be responsible for taking notes at the meetings so minutes can be sent out to members. It is a good idea to keep a file of minutes for the year to look back on during evaluation time or just for information. A good format for minutes would be the following:
  - Members Present
  - Members Absent
  - Reports/Updates
  - Progress on Old Business
  - New Business
  - Assignments and Responsibilities
  - Next Meeting (day, time, place)
  
- Don't be afraid to add spice to your meetings! Have a guest speaker and/or refreshments once in a while. Conduct fun, new icebreakers at the beginning of meetings (especially early in the year).