



Running an Effective Meeting

SHEETS

MEETING PREPARATION

- Define the purpose of the meeting. If you can't find a purpose, don't meet.
- Know what structure to use to conduct the meeting (parliamentary procedure, informal, etc.).
- State objectives and expectations.
- Plan for the environment of the meeting and consider the unexpected.
- Develop an agenda. Agendas should include purpose, topics, lead persons, and time estimates. Here is a sample:
 - Call to order
 - Correction and approval of the last meeting's minutes
 - Announcements
 - Committee reports
 - Unfinished business
 - New business
 - Special issues
 - Adjournment
- Distribute the agenda and any background material or articles prior to the meeting so members can come prepared.
- Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a specific time limit and stick to it.
- Arrange the room so that members face each other (i.e., a circle or semi-circle).
- Be sure everyone knows where and when the meeting will be held; if possible hold meetings at the same time and place every week.

MEETING BASICS

- Try to keep meetings to no more than one hour in length – this helps keep everyone focused!
- Only meet if there is a purpose (e.g., a decision to be made).
- Never start a meeting without knowing how it will end.
- Try to send out an agenda prior to a meeting.
- Begin meetings on time.

MEETING PROCESS

- Greet members and make them feel welcome.
- If possible, serve light refreshments; they make members feel welcome and comfortable.

- Start on time, end on time, and stick to the agenda.
- Encourage discussion and feedback. Members need to see that their input is important. If the meeting will not involve any member interaction or discussion, then you might consider substituting a memorandum or newsletter in place of a meeting. If members don't have the opportunity to get involved in meetings, they will probably get bored.
- Keep the conversation on a topic toward an eventual decision.
- Keep minutes of the meeting.
- The leader or facilitator should be a role model by listening and showing interest, seeing other people's perspective, accepting differences, being flexible and enriching growth.
- Set a date, time and place for the next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING:

- Write up and distribute minutes within two or three days. Quick action reinforces the importance of the meeting. Minutes remind members about points of discussion, tasks to be performed, and decisions to be made.
- Discuss any problems that occurred during the meeting with other officers and members. Evaluate the meeting by open discussion, written evaluation, or round robin and brainstorm some ways that improvements can be made. For example, if you find that the members felt the meetings were too boring, include some fun activities during the next meeting.
- Follow-up on delegated tasks. See to it that members understand and carry out their responsibilities.
- Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Most importantly, give recognition and appreciation to members for excellent and timely progress!

For more information on organization and personal development skills in the SOAR series, stop by or call UNL Student Involvement, 200 Nebraska Union, 472-2454; or 300 Nebraska East Union, 472-1780. Staff members will be happy to assist you and answer your questions.

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