

Leading Effective Meetings

The club President or meeting leader can make a huge difference in a group's productivity. The more prepared and organized a leader is for his/her meeting, the better the meeting will flow. Maximize your group's time and productivity by following these actions.

- **Arrange the room:** If possible, arrange chairs so that members face each other and can be heard.
- **Start the meeting on time:** A large amount of time is wasted by leaders who wait for more people to arrive before starting a meeting. Once people know that you start your meetings on time, they will arrive on time.
- **Review agenda:** Briefly review the aims and purpose as the meeting gets started. This helps members focus their attention and understand what will be required of them. If possible, distribute the agenda to members prior to the meeting.
- **Keep discussion focused:** Keep people on track by following the agenda. Write a note on any issues that come up that are off topic and address them at the end of the meeting (if there is time) or plan to discuss at the next meeting.
- **Encourage participation:** Effective meetings are participatory and good leaders try to get everyone involved. Be a role model by listening, showing interest, appreciation and confidence in members.
- **Summarize decisions:** When the group seems to have come to a consensus, restate and summarize what the final decision is. This helps to ensure that all members hear the same thing and can prevent problems later.
- **Agree on an action plan:** Outline the specifics that must be completed before the next meeting.
- **Draft agenda for next meeting:** Ask for agenda items for the next meeting. People are more likely to participate in a meeting if they have had some input into building the agenda.
- **Schedule next meeting:** End the meeting on a unifying or positive note, and set a date, time and place for the next meeting.
- **Write up minutes:** After the meeting, write up and distribute minutes within four days. Quick action reinforces the importance of the meeting and reduces errors of memory.