

Developing an Agenda

Why have an agenda?

1. Informs people on what to expect at the meeting.
2. Members can prepare for the meeting.
3. Provides an order for dealing with issues at a meeting.
4. It can be used to teach people how to prepare for a meeting.

Methods for Developing an Agenda

One Person--The organization leader sits down and writes the agenda for the next meeting.

Input from Others--Written or verbal input from other members. There are two ways this can be accomplished.

1. The agenda is written by the leader and then the members are asked if there are other things that need to be added.
2. The leader puts out a "Call for Agenda Items." Based on the topics submitted by members of the organization, the agenda is compiled. The leader may also add items to the agenda.

Executive Committee--The executive committee meets before the meeting to discuss and develop the items that will be on the agenda.

Total Group--At the beginning of the meeting, the group determines the agenda for the meeting.

Formats

Formal or Standing--The main points stay the same from meeting to meeting.

Informal or Flexible--The agenda may look different from meeting to meeting. All important items will be discussed, but the format will be changed for the group's development or need.

Prioritized--A list of items to be dealt with, discussed, reported, or announced in order of importance.

Timed--This method can be applied to previous formats. It adds a time limit to each item.

Descriptive--Gives plenty of information to the group so they can be more prepared for the meeting.

Sample Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Correction and Approval of Minutes
5. General Announcements
6. Officer Reports
7. Committee Reports
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Special Issues
11. Adjournment

Say What is on Your Mind Without Being Hostile.

Do not attack the other person.

-Criticism, threats, name-calling, etc., will not help solve a problem. The other person may not hear--or want to hear--what you have to say.

Be assertive

-This means expressing what you think and feel without attacking the other person. One way is to use "I" statements instead of "you" statements. For example, you can say, "I was upset because my idea was ignored" instead of, "You think you are the only one with brains around here."

Work for a Winning Solution--a Solution That Everyone Can Feel Good About!

Two ways to arrive at a winning solution:

Negotiation

-This is when two parties--or groups--decide to work out a problem between themselves.

Mediation

-This is a kind of negotiation in which a third person--or group--helps the other two parties:

- Communicate.
- Stick to solving the problem or situation.
- Meet halfway and work out a plan.
- Follow through with the plan.

A mediator's job is to:

- Ask questions.
- Listen to both sides.
- Find out what each side wants out of the situation.
- Make sure only one person talks at a time.
- Help the two parties agree on a way to settle the problem and feel they both have gained--not lost.

A mediator serves as a neutral party.

-He/she is not a decision-maker. A mediator helps people examine their beliefs and values, enabling them to make their own decisions. A mediator does not tell people what they should do.

A mediator should empower both sides.

-This is one of a mediator's most important roles. Empowering enables both parties to:

- Reach a deeper understanding of each other--and themselves.
- Make a decision together.
- Work cooperatively to carry out the decision.

Tips for Handling Difficult People

Do not take it personally.

-Try to understand why the person is being difficult. His or her feelings probably have little to do with you. He or she may be under extra pressures at home or work.

Let the person "blow off team."

-People are more likely to be cooperative if they have expressed their feelings. Be patient and keep calm.

Recognize the person's point of view.

-This does not mean giving up your own. You can be assertive and understanding. For example, "I understand you want to reorganize things now. I would like some more time to study your plan first."

Get help if you feel you are in danger.

-Call for help or walk away. Do not get caught in a physical conflict.

When you are really Upset...

Relax your body

-Slowly tighten and then relax your muscles. Do this several times--it can help you release any anger, frustration, etc.

Calm your mind by using deep breathing.

- Breathe in slowly through your nose (let your lungs fill with air).
- Then, breathe out slowly through your mouth.

Take “Time out.”

- Count to 10, take a short walk, leave the room, etc. Do whatever it takes to avoid saying or doing something that you will regret.

Information taken from the booklet, What Everyone Should Know About Conflict Resolution from East Stroudsburg University.

Conflict Management Success Creed

I believe that:

- 1) A mutually acceptable solution to the conflict is available and desirable.
- 2) Differences of opinion lead to creativity in devising solutions.
- 3) Cooperation with the other party is more beneficial than competition.
- 4) The other party has the ability to compete successfully but chooses to cooperate.
- 5) All persons involved in a conflict are trustworthy and will reflect their attitudes accurately in their statements.
- 6) Each person is of equal value in reaching a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict.

Taken from the Leadership Resource Center at Grand Valley State University.