

HOW TO HAVE MORE EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



How many times have you attended a meeting which promised to be "brief", and then has gone on and on and on for hours?

There is a solution. Know the rules of order in a meeting and use them!

The most effective meetings that I have attended have been conducted by a president who knows Robert's Rules of Order, who has sent the agenda has provided any pertinent information to the members before the meeting and has provided paper and pencil for the members to write down motions.

Lets take a look at these factors:

1. Presidents who know the rules know how to keep discussion moving and when to take a vote without someone having to "call for the question". This president knows that no one can discuss an issue unless a motion is made first and then seconded. This saves time! If a motion isn't seconded, it isn't discussed. (A second does not mean someone is in favor of the idea but that it should be discussed.) How many times has only one person wanted to do something and no one else wants to discuss it, and because no one knows or follows the rules valuable time has been lost by allowing this person to stand and ramble on and on without a motion on the floor.
2. Another time waster is ill-conceived motions. Providing members with paper and pencil to write a clearly thought out motion can save time because it doesn't have to be amended many times to make it clear; or it doesn't have to be withdrawn and then start over again. A well thought out motion includes what the group is to do, how and when it is to be done and how much time and money is to be spent.
3. Here's another way to save time: Give the people the information they need before the meeting so they can have their ideas well formulated before they discuss them.
4. Another time waster is calling on committee chairmen to give reports when they don't have one to give or they aren't there. The president should call every committee chairman who is to give a report before the meeting to make sure that he/she will be at the meeting and have a report to give. Only those chairmen who have a report ready to give should be called on. To expedite the giving of reports, chairmen should sit in the front so that they don't waste time getting to the front to give their reports. If you have a committee that is researching a project and that committee is supposed to give a recommendation to the members in its report, phrase the recommendation as a "motion", not a recommendation. The motion should come at the end of the report, and the reporting member of the committee (usually the chairman), states: "By direction of the committee, I move that" A motion coming from a committee does not need a second because at least one other committee member has agreed that it should be discussed. This cuts out a step. If a committee makes a recommendation, someone still has to make a motion to accept the committee's recommendation.

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5. The President needs to know when to call for the vote: Let's say someone has made a motion, and the chair has repeated it. "It is moved and seconded to.....Is there any discussion?" If the chair looks around and no one is standing to discuss it , the chair can say, "As many as are in favor say 'Aye'. (wait for the response from the group) Those opposed say, 'No'." (wait for response) Announce the vote. "The 'Ayes' have it and the motion is carried and we will do.....So & so will carry it out." or, "The 'noes' have it and the motion is lost." Then go on to the next business in order.
6. Another thing many people don't know is that a member can only speak twice to a motion, but only after everyone who wants to speak for the first time does so. This certainly keeps debate going and stops any member that is always popping up to talk after each member speaks.
7. An effective president, a leader, provides his membership with information so that they know how to keep meetings moving too.

Every Member Should Know

- How to obtain the floor to make a motion or to speak to a motion.
- How to phrase a motion.
- The ranking of motions (Presidents and Secretaries need to know this too)
- Member's rights in debate.

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