

MEETING BASICS

If a groan is the typical response to your announcement of a meeting, consider going back to the basics to identify areas for improvement.

The first task for the convener of any meeting is to be clear about the reason for meeting:

1. Dispense information.
2. Make decisions on group issues.
3. Solve problems.
4. Create new options, visions, directions, and proposals.
5. Plan/strategize on group tasks.
6. Establish new governance procedures.
7. Air concerns.
8. Evaluation progress on work.
9. Invest in the group's learning and growth.
10. Celebrate successes (Champion, *Tools for Change Workshops*. NSDC, 1993).

HAVE AN AGENDA for every meeting. If there is an opportunity for others to suggest items for the agenda, distribute the Agenda Input form on Page 5 with a note inviting suggestions.

DISTRIBUTE THE AGENDA at least a week before the meeting. Note time, date, and place of meeting prominently on the agenda.

LABEL EACH AGENDA ITEM so participants understand how much input (and therefore preparation) is expected from them.

SET STARTING AND ENDING TIMES. Assign a time to each agenda item.

PLACE AGENDA ITEMS strategically. Items that will benefit from high energy should be near the top of the agenda.

IDENTIFY A RECORDER for each meeting, preferably a non-participant.

IDENTIFY WHAT IS EXPECTED to occur as a result of the meeting. This can be done in minutes that are distributed or in simple chart form similar to that on Page 5.

EVALUATE EACH MEETING as a group. Keep a record of the suggestions so you can improve your next meeting.

alternatives to meetings

ROUND ROBIN MEMOS

Write a memo. List the names of everyone who needs to see it. Circulate the memo to each person listed. Put your name last so the memo comes back to you.

FYI COPIES OF MINUTES/LETTERS/REPORTS

Copy and distribute with a short note.

E-MAIL

Can be read by recipient when convenient and revisited as needed.

INFORMAL CONVERSATION/HALL TALK

Happens more naturally. But some who need information may be overlooked.

ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS

Heightens the listener's sense of importance. Time consuming and may not be consistent.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Good way to gauge reactions as people hear what you have to say. Repetitive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Time saver for everyone except the writer.

BULLETIN BOARD MESSAGES

Easy. Difficult to determine if information has been seen by all who need it.

NEWSLETTERS/WEEKLY BULLETINS

Gets out information to a large group. Time intensive.

BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Voluntary. Not everyone who needs to be there can be counted on to be present.

Sources: *Keys to Successful Meetings* by Stephanie Hirsh, Ann Delephant, and Sherry Sparks (NSDC, 1991) and *Mining Group Gold* by Thomas Kayser (McGraw-Hill, 1995).

Agenda input

TOPICS OR IDEAS FOR THE MEETING. _____

PLEASE SEND OR FAX TO:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

DUE: No later than three days before _____
(the meeting date).

1. Place the following item on the agenda:

2. _____ will be
available to lead the discussion.

3. Time needed: _____ minutes

4. Type of item:

- ☐ For Information
☐ For Discussion
☐ For Decision (What type of decision is required?)
☐ For Evaluation
☐ For Our Growth
☐ For Solution
☐ For Proposal
☐ For Airing Concerns
☐ For Fun
☐ Urgent
☐ Long Range

5. Non-group members who should be
present for this discussion:

6. Signature: _____
 Print name: _____
 Date: _____

What do we do now?

COMMENTS TO FACILITATOR: Distribute a copy of this follow-up sheet to each participant along with the minutes of the meeting.

Group: _____

Date: _____

Summary: _____

Decisions reached: _____

NEXT STEPS:

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?	WHEN IS IT DUE?