How to Lead a Meeting

Meeting Planning Checklist

1. Set goals for the meeting and prepare an agenda
   - Prepare yourself – prioritize issues to be discussed, issues from previous meetings
   - Consult with other members and executive board to finalize agenda
   - Research information necessary for making important decisions
2. Arrange all logistics
   - Find a comfortable and convenient meeting place
   - Arrange in advance for AV equipment, dry erase markers, and other supplies
   - Arrive early to set up and greet attendees
   - Set up seating arrangement
   - Prepare directional signs and place in key places around the building
   - Provide nametags
   - Provide sign-in sheets
3. Send out announcements, invitations, and reminders for meeting
   - Invite guest speakers to present on special topics or issues
   - Invite all relevant constituents, target audience
   - Send general and personal invitations early, send reminders
   - Supply attendees with agenda, minutes, and background information in advance
4. Be courteous, respectful, and inclusive
   - Start and finish the meeting on time
   - Set a welcoming tone; consider an icebreaker activity
   - Engage all participants during the meeting
5. Bring closure
   - Come to resolutions
   - Prepare an action plan
   - Summarize the main points, emphasizing on follow-up tasks
   - Plan or confirm the next meeting’s time, place, and location

Being Productive

O – Objective: If you are having a meeting just to impart information, don’t waste time with a meeting. Send them a newsletter. The objective should have an active component and if possible, a product to show for it.

A – Agenda: The agenda is a list of the topics you’ll address to get to that objective, with a time limit to keep you on track.

R – Roles: Determine who is running the meeting, who is keeping notes, and who will assign “to do” items from the meeting.

Debriefing

At the end of the meeting, discuss:

- To what degree did the meeting accomplish its desired outcomes?
- What contributed to the meeting’s success?
- Does each team member have a sense of how the group is working together, and can each make ongoing improvement?
- Did all team members have an opportunity to give and/or receive feedback?

Adapted from Jonathan Powell – Running an Effective Meeting. The Leadership Workshop Series. October 15, 2008, Via Center for Leadership and Community Engagement, University of Arkansas