RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

Many people dread attending meetings if they know that they will be boring, unproductive, and last too

long. The key to an effective meeting is careful planning. Here are some steps to keep in mind to make

sure, that your meeting will be a productive one.

BEFORE THE MEETING:

1) Define the purpose of the meeting. Meetings without a purpose usually are unorganized, boring and

last a long time. If you cannot find a purpose for a meeting, then don’t have a meeting.

2) Develop an agenda. Below is a sample:

* Call to order / Roll call
* Correction and approval of the last meeting’s minutes
* Committee reports
* Unfinished business
* New business
* Announcements
* Adjournment

3) Distribute the agenda and any background material or articles prior to the meeting so members can

come prepared.

4) Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it.

5) Arrange the room so that the members face each other (i.e., a circle or semi-circle)

6) Be sure everyone knows where and when the meeting will be held; if possible, hold meetings at the

same time and place every week.

DURING THE MEETING:

1) Greet members and make them feel welcome.

2) If possible, serve light refreshments; they make members feel welcome and comfortable.

3) Start on time. End on time.

4) Stick to the agenda.

5) Encourage discussion and feedback. Members need to see that their input is important. If the

 meeting will not involve any member interaction or discussion, then you might consider substituting a

 memorandum or newsletter in place of a meeting. (If members do not have the opportunity to get

 involved in meetings, they will probably get bored.)

6) Keep the conversation on topic toward an eventual decision.

7) Keep minutes of the meeting.

8) The leader or facilitator should be a role model by listening and by showing interest, appreciation and

 confidence in members.

9) Set a date, time, and place for the next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING:

1) Write up and distribute minutes within two or three days. Quick action reinforces the importance of

the meeting.

2) Discuss any problems that occurred during the meeting with other officers. Evaluate the meeting and

brainstorm some ways that improvements can be made. For example, if you find that members felt

meetings were too boring, decide to include some fun activities during the next meeting. Or if

members feel meetings are too laid back and not accomplishing anything, decide to implement some

structure into future meetings.

3) Follow-up on delegated tasks. See that members understand and carry-out their responsibilities.

4) Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.

5) Conduct a periodic evaluation of the meetings. Note any areas that can be analyzed and improved for

more productive meetings.

6) And most importantly, give recognition and appreciation to members for excellent and timely

progress.

Remember, if your meetings are too long, unorganized, and boring, your members will probably lose

interest and drop out of the organization. By following these suggested steps, you will find that

meetings do not have to be dull; you will also find that both you and your members will get more

accomplished.