GOVERNING BOARD TRAINING
November 25, 2010

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS
Meetings

Every day 83 million people attend 11.5 million meetings.

• Characteristics of negative meetings:\n  ▪ 83% – drift from the subject
  ▪ 77% – poor preparation
  ▪ 74% – questionable effectiveness
  ▪ 68% – lack of listening
  ▪ 62% – verbose participants
  ▪ 60% – length
  ▪ 51% – lack of participation

^ From Achieving Effective Meetings – Not Easy But Possible, Bradford D. Smart in a survey of 635 executives.
Meetings

• What people are looking for from effective meetings*
  
  ▪ 88% – participation
  ▪ 66% – define the meeting’s purpose
  ▪ 62% – address each item on the agenda
  ▪ 59% – assign follow-up action
  ▪ 47% – record discussion
  ▪ 46% – invite essential personnel
  ▪ 36% – publish an agenda

* From GM Consultants, Pittsburgh, PA 1993
Effective meetings don’t just happen

- Require deliberate planning
- Must be conducted in an effective and efficient manner
- Responsibility of leader
Before the Meeting

• Define the purpose of the meeting.

• Identify the participants.
  – Every invitee should have a role.
  – Identify a recorder or secretary.

• Prepare an agenda in advance of the meeting.
  – Communicate the intent of each agenda item using labels such as (A) Action, (I) Information, (D) Decision.
  – Identify estimate of time allocated to the agenda item.
Before the Meeting

• Prepare or identify background information.
• Assign responsibilities for agenda items and communicate to those responsible.
• Publish the agenda and identify background information to be reviewed.
• Plan for breaks – lunch, coffee, etc.
Before the Meeting

- Think through the conduct of the meeting
- Consider logistics
  - Room – size
  - Layout – seating, distractions, etc.
  - Support items – projector, white board, smart board, pens, paper, markers, etc.
The Bell Shaped Agenda

Purpose of the Bell Shaped Agenda is to structure events around the group’s energy and attention. The first few items help the meeting participants to work as a group on easy items before they tackle more difficult items.

Item 1: Welcome
Item 2: Minutes
Item 3: Announcements
  – non-controversial
  – short
  – example: upcoming events
Item 4: Easy Item
  – More than one item may be included in this section, but should not be controversial
The Bell Shaped Agenda

Item 5: Hardest Item
– Why in the middle?
– Attendance: late comers have arrived and early-leavers have not left.
– Attention: focused on meeting by this time, not yet concerned with next appointment.

Item 6: For Discussion Only
– Will often be presented as Item 5: Hardest item at subsequent meeting for vote or decision.
During the Meeting

• Arrive early
  – Arrange the room if necessary
  – Know how to control the lighting and temperature in the room.
  – Distribute handouts.

• Begin on time.

• Introduce members if not familiar; introduce visitors.

• Establish ground rules, if necessary.

• Run the meeting.
During the Meeting

- Control interruptions – ask that cell phones and pagers be turned-off.
- Identify and record results.
- Assign responsibilities for follow-up – Action Registry.
- End on time.
- Thank participants for their input and reinforce the importance of outcomes on the organization.
Meeting Room

Space matters!

- Members must be able to easily see one another.
- Room should be comfortable temperature.
- Adequate space for planners, notebooks, or laptops
- People should be able to hear the discussion easily.
- If it is a large group, the meeting’s facilitator should consider standing.
Meeting Room Set-Up

• Theater Style
  – Leader has great power by position.
  – Participation and interruption by audience is limited.

• U-Shaped Style
  – Equality of membership.
  – No doubt of who the leader is.
  – Good visibility for visual aids.

• Circle Style
  – Democratic: equality is stressed.
  – Great visibility by participants.
  – Obvious body language.
  – Excellent participation.
The Chairman

• Prepare for the meeting.

• Appoint secretary/minute taker if there is not a regular.

• Conduct and control the meeting:
  – watch timing or assign someone to this responsibility
  – ensure all have an equal opportunity to speak
  – adjudicate as and when necessary
  – effect compromise on occasion
• Close each item
  Ensure action is clear
  By whom and by when

• Check that the minutes are produced accurately and in timely manner
Attendees – Profiles

• People often react to other people - not to their *ideas*.

• Chair must stress that effectiveness = disregard for personal or departmental allegiances.

• Self perception - some see themselves as elder statesman, joker, voice of reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Building Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Initiator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggests new/different ideas/approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Opinion Giver</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States pertinent beliefs about the discussion or others' suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Elaborator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builds on suggestions made by others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attendees – Supportive

### Group Maintenance Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tension Reliever</td>
<td>Uses humor or calls for a break at appropriate moments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Compromiser</td>
<td>Willing to yield when necessary for progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Clarifier</td>
<td>Offers rationales, probes for meaning, restates problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tester</td>
<td>Raises questions to test if group is ready to come to a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Summarizer</td>
<td>Tries to pull discussion together, reviews progress so far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Harmonizer</td>
<td>Mediates differences of opinion, reconciles points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Encourager</td>
<td>Praises and supports others in their contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gate Keeper</td>
<td>Keeps communications open, creates opportunities for participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attendees – Disruptive

### Group Blocking Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Aggressor</td>
<td>Deflates status of others, disagrees and criticizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blocker</td>
<td>Stubbornly disagrees, cites unrelated material, returns to previous topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Withdrawer</td>
<td>Will not participate, private conversations, takes copious personal notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Recognition Seeker</td>
<td>Boasts and talks excessively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Topic Jumper</td>
<td>Continually changes the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dominator</td>
<td>Tries to take over, asserts authority, manipulates the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Special Pleader</td>
<td>Draws attention to own concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Playboy/Girl</td>
<td>Shows off, tells funny stories, nonchalant, cynical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Self-Confessor</td>
<td>Talks irreverently of own feelings and insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Devil's Advocate</td>
<td>More devil than advocate!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attendees – Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotypes You May Expect to Find in a Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Chatterbox</td>
<td>Talks continually, rarely on the topic, has little to contribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sleeper</td>
<td>Uninterested in the proceedings, some can sleep with eyes open!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Destroyer</td>
<td>Crushes any and every idea, can always find something wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rationalist</td>
<td>Makes worthwhile contributions, ideas are well thought-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Trapper</td>
<td>Waits for opportune moment to show error has been made – likes to trap the Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Know-All</td>
<td>Tries to monopolize, but can have good ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thinker</td>
<td>Shy and slow to come forward, but is a great asset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dealing with difficult members

• Make sure that all meeting participants understand their responsibilities.
  – All members were invited to the meeting for a reason
  – All members should feel free to contribute

• Members who are silent
  – Begin meetings by engaging every member of the group
  – Consider breaking larger group into smaller groups to develop input
Dealing with difficult members

- Members who are vocally dominant
  - Redirect discussion to other members
    "We all recognize your expertise in this area, but let’s hear from some others in case some new ideas emerge."

- Members who are negative
  - Probe the negativity to validate concerns
  - Redirect discussion to other members
  - If behavior persists, consider speaking to them after the meeting or before the next meeting
After the Meeting

• Publish the minutes promptly.

• Contact those identify with responsibilities for action items.

• At least once a year assess the meetings.

• Once every two years carry out a group self-evaluation.
Parliamentary Procedures

• Robert’s Rules of Order
  – Parliamentary guide for running meetings.
  – First Edition February 1876
  – Guiding principle, by General Henry Martyn Robert:
    “All shall be heard, but the majority shall decide”
Additional Thoughts

• Don’t Read to the Group
  • Place more emphasis on *processing* information, than on *giving* information
  • A meeting is a place to discuss an issue to assure agreement or full understanding.

• Make sure everyone contributes to a meeting’s success.
  • Everyone must do their part.
  • Make sure all meeting participants understand their responsibilities
Additional Thoughts

• Balance participation
  • Meetings will have people who are silent, vocally dominant, or negative.
  • The facilitator/chairperson as well as members of the group can redirect this unproductive behavior

• Allow time for process and group development
  • Checking off agenda items in a rapid-fire process is not always productive. It may move the meeting along more quickly, but may leave you wondering ‘what happened?’ when it’s over.
Questions
EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

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