

Less Time, More Impact

Suggestions for Surviving in Organizations

Effective Meetings

What makes an effective meeting? Many of us might answer “A meeting that:

- Starts and finishes on time;
- Has an agenda so I know what to expect and can be prepared;
- Is lively and moves forward;
- Has simple and to the point presentations;
- Allocates enough time for each topic;
- Has comfortable conditions (heat, chairs, tables, breaks, etc.);
- Has well prepared leaders and members;
- Allows me to feel I belong;
- Involves all members;
- Is held toward our purpose;
- Closes on a positive note.”

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*An Oconto County University
Extension Leadership Development
Fact Sheet*

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Often we hear the complaint, “The meeting was way too long.”
What is the objector really saying?

- I got tired sitting.
- The meeting ran too late so I was sleepy.
- We tried to do too much.
- It lasted longer than I expected.
- It was a very dull meeting.
- I didn’t really have a chance to participate.

Conversely, when we hear “The meeting was too short”, what conclusions could be drawn?

- We still have valuable things to do.
- The time went fast because it was a good meeting.
- I enjoy working with these people.
- I wanted more information.
- The ideas were new and exciting to me.

How can we be sure to have an effective meeting and a meeting where members, who need to get the job done, will come back time and time again? First, it is important to remember that good meetings don’t just happen. They are carefully planned. A meeting that is well run helps people feel that their time is well spent. With preparation and practice leaders and members will leave with a sense of accomplishment.

There are four main principles to effective meetings. They focus on many of the things each of us thinks important.

- 1) Be well prepared.
- 2) Create a climate of fairness and trust.
- 3) Encourage group decision making.
- 4) Tie your work to long range goals.