



## Tips for Running Effective Meetings

Some useful tips to keep in mind as the chair:

- Meetings that are planned with a specific purpose are generally more productive. Clarity about the meeting's purpose encourages the team to identify desired outcomes, and increases the chances for achieving its goals.

Most meetings serve one or more of the following purposes:

- to make decisions
- to share important and timely information
- to divide the group's workload
- to brainstorm
- to problem solve
- to increase morale
- to build team cohesiveness

Ask yourselves what purpose this meeting is serving for you. And what purpose is each agenda item serving?

- A copy of the agenda, and time and place of meeting, should be sent to all members of the team

The chair has primary responsibility for moving people through the agenda in the time available, and involving as many people as possible in the process. He/she helps the group make decisions at the appropriate time, and encourages everyone to take a responsible part in the meeting. A facilitator plays no role in substantive, issue-oriented discussions.

Here are a few recommendations to help a chair.

- start the meeting promptly
- review the agenda
- summarizes major points
- keep the discussion focused (Scope police will help with this as well)
- ask if people are ready to make a decision
- involve everyone in the discussion
- avoid making judgments
- keep people from interrupting each other
- check periodically to see if people are committed to the process and content of the meeting
- set a comfortable but deliberate pace
- help the group make decisions
- look for points of agreement and states them
- avoid letting one or two people dominate the meeting
- see differences of opinions as adding to the discussion, if handled properly



- suggest breaking into small groups if the discussion becomes too complex or heated (then bring everyone back together for debrief)
- encourage people to speak for themselves, not "the group" or "others"
- give the role of the chair to someone else when you want to join the discussion

### Ending the meeting

- It is important to close a meeting with a sense of accomplishment and direction. Before people get up to leave:
  - Ask the minute taker to review all of the decisions that were made; determine who is taking responsibility for carrying them out, and by what date
  - set a time and place for the next meeting and either select or appoint a planning committee for that meeting
  - evaluate the meeting by referring to the purpose or goal and determining how successful the team has been in achieving the goal; examine the group's dynamic (performance and interaction during the meeting) for tone, level of participation by members, and ability to stay within the time frame
  - encourage everyone to participate in cleaning up the room