

## **Holding Effective Meetings**

Meeting management tends to be a set of skills often overlooked in organizations. Meetings are very expensive activities considering the cost of labor and how much does or does not get accomplished. So, take meeting management very seriously and consider these suggestions:

### **Before the Meeting**

- Define the purpose of the meeting.
- Develop an agenda in cooperation with key participants.
- Distribute the agenda, background material, and lengthy documents prior to the meeting so members will be prepared and feel involved.
- Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it. Remember, members have other commitments and are more likely to attend meetings when they are productive.
- Choose a location suitable to your group size and meeting needs.

### **During the Meeting**

- Start on time. End on time.
- Review the agenda (and adhere to it) and set priorities for the meeting.
- Encourage and facilitate group discussion so that all points of view and ideas are brought forward? *(You'll get better quality decisions and more motivated members.)*
- Encourage feedback. Ideas, activities, and commitment to the organization improve when members see their impact on the decision-making process.
- Keep conversation focused on the topic. Feel free to ask for only constructive and non-repetitive comments. Tactfully end discussions when they are leading nowhere or becoming destructive or unproductive.
- Keep minutes of the meeting for future reference in case a question or problem arises.
- Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting on a unifying or positive note.
- Set a date, time, and place for the next meeting, if applicable.

### **After the Meeting**

- Write up and distribute minutes within two days.
- Follow-up on delegation decisions.
- Give recognition and appreciation to excellent and timely progress.
- Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Conduct a periodic evaluation of the meetings and take action to continually improve.