

Section

3 Effective Meetings

Planning for Effective Meetings

Facilitation

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“It takes patience, forbearance, flexibility, humor, and a strong belief that what you’re doing matters... to be an effective facilitator.”

PLANNING FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

This section will cover many facets important to the development of a successful meeting. Study this section carefully as you begin thinking about your first meeting as president.

Too often people attend meetings only to leave at the end feeling the meetings were a waste of time and energy. Why is this such a frequent lament? Common meeting complaints include:

“We never start on time.”

“Meetings drag on and don’t accomplish anything.”

“Only a few people have something concrete to do.”

“We keep rehashing old business.”

“Some people dominate the discussion.”

“People come unprepared or fail to follow through on work.”

As Altrusa leaders, we want to guard against these comments. Meetings can be both productive and fun. Meetings should:

- provide members with up-to-date information
- develop a sense of team and group development
- encourage broader participation in decision making
- spread the work load
- stimulate more creative solutions
- enhance and improve initial ideas
- encourage leadership growth of members
- develop commitment to group decisions

(Taken from MacKenzie and Moore, pages 111 and 113)

Effective meeting checklist

Use this handy checklist for planning your meetings.

Before the meeting

- 1) Planning (why, what, who, when, and where)
 - Why do you need a meeting?
 - What is your purpose?
 - Who should attend?
 - When will the meeting be held?
 - Where will the meeting be held?
 - Distribute the agenda in advance
 - Check out the room
 - Plan the seating arrangement
 - Be sure the equipment is in working order
 - Itemize materials and handouts for use

Beginning the meeting

- 2) Start on time
 - Explain the group's purpose
 - Review the agenda (revise, if necessary, and proceed)
 - Clarify procedures and set time parameters
 - Review action items from the last meeting

During the meeting

- 3) Develop and maintain a thought line
 - Stress openness and freedom of participation
 - Involve all members
 - Summarize periodically and test for understanding

At the end of the meeting

- 4) Establish and assign action items
 - Evaluate the meeting results
 - Close the meeting positively and on time

After the meeting

- 5) Prepare and distribute the minutes (secretary)
 - Follow-up on action items
 - Plan next meeting

(Taken from "The Effective Meeting Checklist" issued by the Boeing Company)

FACILITATION

The leader (club president or committee chairman) of the group is most commonly the person who facilitates the meeting, focusing on the dynamics of the process. The aim of a good facilitator is to “ease” the situation, to help good things happen. She/he protects all participants, helps everyone to be heard accurately, clarifies and seeks consensus.

Facilitation is:

- having influence in a group
- not being a participant
- being responsible for keeping group members aware of what is happening
- being responsible for maintaining norms and standards of procedures
- keeping the tension level of the group operating at an optimum level—neither too much nor too little
- giving vitality/energy to the group
- becoming a referee when necessary
- providing opportunities
- not being part of the problem or solution
- having observation skills for making interventions
- describing rather than evaluating
- focusing on observable behaviors and communication

What constitutes good facilitation?

As the president of your local club, one of your main functions is to facilitate all club meetings. Here are a few rules that will make your job easier.

A good facilitator:

- Develops *goals* and clarifies *expectations* (both the facilitator's and the participants').
- Gives up the *need to* be in control.
- Asks *questions* to provoke thinking, stimulate recall, challenge beliefs, confront opinions, draw implications, and promote conclusions.
- Realizes that *adults have something real to lose* in a meeting. Their egos are on the line when they are asked to risk trying a new behavior in front of peers.
- Balances the *many factors that make up an event*: presentation of new material, debate, discussion, and sharing of relevant experiences.
- Establishes *a learning environment* that draws on participants' experiences, protects minority opinion, keeps disagreements civil, makes connection among various opinions and ideas, and reminds the group of the variety of possible solutions to the problem.
- *Reinforces participants* for their contributions and accomplishments.

(“Adult Learning, What Do We Know For Sure,” pages 38 and 39)

People don't have good meetings because they don't know what good meetings are like. Good meetings aren't just about work. They're about fun—keeping people charged up. It's more than collaboration, it's “colibertion”—people freeing each other up to think more creatively and act more effectively.

— Bernard DeKoven, founder, Institutes for Better Meetings —

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEETING LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS

In meetings every member has responsibilities whether it be the president, committee chairman, or the newest member. No matter what your role, be prepared.

As the meeting leader

- 1) Make an effective beginning
 - Carefully plan the meeting
 - Make pre-meeting arrangements
 - State your purpose, objectives and rules

- 2) Aim for maximum participation
 - Introduce members
 - Encourage interaction among group members
 - Recognize members who have not contributed
 - Guard against dominance by a few members
 - Test the information and reasoning periodically.

- 3) Keep the discussion moving forward
 - Keep the discussion orderly and logical
 - Keep the discussion on track
 - Summarize frequently to show progress
 - Delay decisions based on incomplete facts

- 4) Create a participative climate
 - Encourage members to express their opinions
 - Avoid judging ideas too quickly
 - Maintain informality to stimulate discussion
 - Speak in terms of “we” and “our”; ideas are the product of the group.

- 5) Maintain necessary control
 - Be neutral; act as a referee when directing discussion
 - Keep side conversations to a minimum
 - Focus on ideas not personalities
 - Poll the group to test thinking and agreement

- 6) Close the discussion effectively
 - Provide a final summary
 - Give proper credit and group praise
 - Make assignments for follow-up
 - Faithfully observe the time limits

As a meeting participant

- Contribute by being prepared
- Contribute ideas and information openly
- Ask questions of others in the group
- Listen carefully to new information or ideas
- Cooperate with others toward achieving group goals
- Assist the leader in keeping the meeting on target

(From “The Effective Meeting Checklist” issued by the Boeing Company)

Points to watch in handling a meeting

- ⌞ Never start a meeting without an agenda.
- ⌞ State the purpose of the meeting and read the agenda.
- ⌞ Keep the meeting moving.
- ⌞ Speak clearly.
- ⌞ Prevent general hubbub.
- ⌞ Avoid talking to individuals.
- ⌞ Keep speakers talking clearly and audibly.
- ⌞ Sum up what the speakers have said and obtain a decision.
- ⌞ Stop aimless discussion by recommending committee study.
- ⌞ Keep control of the meeting at all times without stifling free comment.
- ⌞ Don’t argue with a speaker.
- ⌞ If you have a comment, ask for the floor as a participant.
- ⌞ Don’t squelch a troublemaker.
- ⌞ Be aware of participants’ comfort, i.e., temperature, thirst, etc.
- ⌞ At the end of a meeting, check that every member feels her/his particular subjects have been adequately covered.

BASIC TYPES OF MEETINGS

A professional speaker—

is invited if your treasury can afford it, for there is nothing like a professional to add to your attendance and your reputation in the community.

A panel—

is composed of a moderator or leader and panel members. A “formal panel” of four or six is introduced by the moderator. They discuss a single topic or phases of a topic and rise to speak. In an “informal panel,” discussion on a topic is channeled by the moderator and all remain seated.

A symposium—

is usually composed of three to five persons. Members of the symposium should be specialists on the subject under discussion.

A debate—

presents affirmative and negative sides and a rebuttal. A leader introduces members of each debating team and handles timing. The decision of a winner is made by judges or the assembly.

A buzz session—

can be used after a lecture. Small groups quickly discuss the subject and the opinion of each small group is presented to the assembly by an appointed reporter.

A round table—

discussion is usually called a “shirt-sleeve” session. Here everyone gets in the act. It is best for a small group; if used by a large group, divide into buzz sessions and report.

A discussion group—

is composed of six to twenty people who meet informally to discuss a topic of mutual interest.

A workshop—

is for ten to twenty-five people, usually with a similar problem who try to solve the problem or topic through their research or experience.

A clinic—

is small and conducted similarly to a round table discussion where those participating “dig” into one topic at a time.

A seminar— has an authoritative professional instructor who presents a specific subject for discussion, usually in lecture format.

A skit— is a short, rehearsed dramatic presentation by two or more people.

Role playing— has people in a group act out a situation, usually with no script or set dialogue. Two or more people make up parts and develop a story situation on a designated idea.

A demonstration— has a group in action and is an excellent program to use as a public relations feature or at a membership meeting.

An anniversary meeting— may honor past presidents and/or charter members. Seat them at a special table and ask them to briefly recall highlights of each year as a “History Story.” Don’t forget a special anniversary cake.

A guest program— receives invited guests at a tea or reception. Keep the program short, perhaps only music with one short talk on the purpose of Altrusa or one of the club’s service projects. Invite presidents of other groups in your city.

A civic program— ties a program theme in with some city, state, or national historical event. It may be an international night.

A hobby or talent event— showcases the hobbies or talents of club members at a special meeting.

A media meeting— includes invited representatives of local newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations at a special Altrusa meeting for them. This honor may bring more publicity to your club.

A library meeting— honors your local librarians at a special Altrusa meeting. This will be your thank you for all their assistance with local literacy projects.

AGENDAS

The preparation of an agenda must be specific enough to make it truly useful to the participants and the facilitator. To simply list such things as Unfinished Business and New Business really tells nothing. A well-conceived agenda fully prepares the group for the business at hand and assures an expedient and productive meeting.

If it is opportune, sending out an agenda prior to the meeting is most effective. Members have an opportunity to prepare in advance. Often this is not practical in an Altrusa club. Place the agenda on the table prior to the meeting. This allows members an opportunity to study it. It is always wise to phone or email members from whom you will be requesting reports. This will give them the time they need to prepare.

An agenda also helps the facilitator or chairman to stay on track and on time. Anticipating the possible reaction of the group to each item should be considered. This will help in determining the time factor. **Don't let your meeting drag on.**

Let's prepare an agenda

What tools do I need?

- 1) A copy of the bylaws and policies.
- 2) A copy of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 3) A copy of the minutes of the board meeting.
- 4) A list of the board members and committee chairmen.

How do I use these tools?

- 1) Bylaws and policies: Be aware of the bylaws governing your current activities.
 - Is this the month you select a Nominating Committee?
 - Do you elect the committee or are they appointed?
 - Who elects/appoints the committee?
 - How many members are on the committee?
- 2) Previous month's minutes
 - Is there unfinished business? Are there any tabled motions?
 - Are there any pending reports?
 - Were any motions sent to committee?
- 3) Board minutes
 - Are there any recommendations which will need to come before the membership?
 - Are there any vacancies filled?
 - Are there any committees needing additional members for an upcoming event?
- 4) Lists
 - Which committee chairmen need to report this month?
 - Which officers have special reports?
 - Which chairmen have special reports?

Now I begin my agenda!

- 1) Call to order (check for quorum)
- 2) Opening (For this food... I pledge...)
- 3) Minutes (corrections only)
- 4) Report of treasurer (questions only) to be placed on file
- 5) Communications
- 6) Report of board actions and recommendations (secretary will present)
- 7) Standing committees (Service, Finance, etc.)
- 8) Special committees (for special projects)
- 9) Unfinished business
- 10) New business
- 11) Benediction and adjourn

Suggestions for planning agendas

Members may ask for a rearrangement of the agenda items. This may be done in a separate agenda item or as part of the president's Call to Order.

Minutes do not need to be read. They can be printed in the club newsletter or distributed to all members as they arrive at a meeting and then be approved "as presented" or "as corrected."

Treasurers can use the same system used for minutes. The treasurer's report, however, is not approved but rather "placed on file" or "filed for audit."

Committees having reports should be listed under appropriate categories. Those without reports are not listed.

Items requiring action should be so listed under each appropriate agenda item.

Agenda items may be rearranged to add continuity or add impact.

During a program meeting, the focus must be on the program. Any business which must transpire, should be conducted at a time when it is least distracting. Some clubs manage to handle business matters between meal courses, others after the program is over.

**Board meeting
sample agenda**

- Call to order President
- Minutes of previous meeting Secretary
- Financial report Treasurer
- Communications Secretary
- Action on Recommendations for Membership
- Reports from committees, discussion of recommendations
- Club performance review
- Formulation of recommendations from board to membership
- Miscellaneous (or new) business
- Adjournment

**Business meeting
sample agenda**

- Call to order President
- Minutes of previous meeting Secretary
- Financial Report Treasurer
- Communications Secretary
- Report of board actions and recommendations
- Reports of standing committees
- Reports of special committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Initiation of new members
- Adjournment

**Program meeting
sample agenda**

- Call to order President
- Introductions (those seated at head table/guests present)
- Program
- Initiation of new members
- Special business
- Benediction
- Adjournment

MEETING AGENDA: ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL, INC. OF _____		
Place:	Date:	Time:
Program/Guests		Topic
Call to Order		
Opening		
Minutes		
Report of treasurer		
Communications		
Report of board actions and recommendations		
Standing committee reports		
Special committee reports		
Unfinished business		Discussion
New business		Discussion
Item	Person responsible	Due date
Next Meeting Date:		

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

All Altrusa groups (clubs, Districts, and International) function through the rules of parliamentary procedure. It gives order to our meetings. The simplest way to become familiar with parliamentary procedure is to acquire a copy of *Points of Order* which is available for a small fee from the International office. It is a simplified version, yet is complete enough to satisfy the needs of all club presidents.

The fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure are:

- Courtesy to all
- Justice for all
- Rights of the minority
- Rule of the majority
- One item at a time
- Partiality for none

Basic rules and principles

- 1) The organization is paramount.
- 2) All members are equal.
- 3) A **quorum** must be present for action to be taken **legally**.
- 4) Consider only **one main motion** at a time; only **one person** may have the floor at a time.
- 5) Full debate on a motion is in order unless limited by standing rules or parliamentary authority (*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*).
- 6) The **issue**, not the person, is under discussion.
- 7) Once settled, a main motion may not be considered in the **same form** in the **same session**... except... by a motion to reconsider.
- 8) A **majority*** vote rules in most instances except when required by club bylaws or parliamentary authority.
- 9) Silence gives consent.

* A majority vote is more than one-half (1/2) of members voting on the particular matter. A two-thirds (2/3) vote (when only two choices are possible) is at least twice as many on one side as on the other.

Pointers for the president or presiding officer

- 1) In opening ceremonies the Invocation is always first, then the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. If you do not have a flag, do not call for the Pledge.
- 2) After the minutes are read or distributed, ask if there are any corrections to the minutes. If there are no corrections, announce that the “minutes are approved as read (or distributed).”
- 3) After the treasurer’s report is given, ask for questions. If there are no questions, state that “the report will be filed with the secretary.” (The treasurer’s report is never approved, the auditor’s report, if there is one, is approved.)
- 4) Either the president or the secretary gives the report of the board of directors. The only information given is the action(s) taken during the meeting.
- 5) Reports of officers are given by the officer or, in their absence, by the secretary or another officer. If a motion comes out of the report, someone other than the officer giving the report should make it.
- 6) Reports of committees are given by the chairman or by a member of each committee. The reporting member makes motions coming out of the report. Sample motion—On behalf of the Program Committee, I move to...
- 7) Special orders are items set forth at a previous time to be handled at a particular meeting such as bylaw changes and elections.
- 8) Elections—If positions are contested and there is the possibility of repeated voting to get a majority vote, it is wise to move the elections up on the agenda to allow for the needed time. Remember an individual must have a majority vote in order to be elected.
- 9) Unfinished business—If you do not know of any unfinished business, simply state that there is no unfinished business and go on to the next item on the agenda: new business.
- 10) When there is no further business, the presiding officer states, “if there is no further business the meeting will be adjourned (pause). The meeting is adjourned.”
- 11) The use of the gavel is to call the meeting to order. One rap of the gavel is sufficient. The gavel should **never** be used like a hammer.
- 12) The presiding officer must stay impartial. If you are not able to stay impartial, the gavel should be handed to the next person in line who does not wish to speak on the motion.

(E. M. Stivers & Associates. Libby Stivers, CP-T, PRP)

How do members get their say?



They make motions! A **motion** is a proposal that the assembly **take a stand** or **take action** on some issue. Members can present motions (make a proposal), second motions (express support for discussion of another member's motion), debate motions (give opinions on the motion), and vote on motions (make a decision). Here's what to do when it's your turn to speak.

Obtain the floor

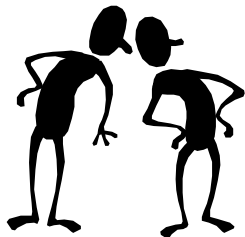


- 1) Wait until the last speaker is finished.
- 2) Rise and address the chair. Say, "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson" or "Mr. (or Madam) President."
- 3) Give your name. The chair will recognize you by repeating it.

Make your motion

- 1) Speak clearly and concisely.
- 2) State your motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we..." instead of "I move that we do not..."
- 3) Avoid personalities and stay on the subject.

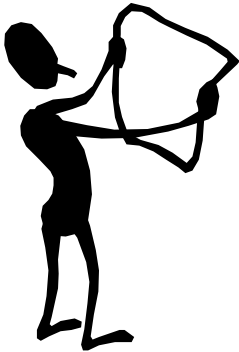
Wait for a second



- 1) Another member will say, "I second the motion."
- 2) Or the chair will call for a second.
- 3) If there is no second, the motion will not be considered.

Chair states the motion

- 1) The chair must say, “It is moved and seconded that...”
- 2) After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- 3) The motion is now “assembly property” and can’t be changed without the consent of the members.

Expand your motion

- 1) The mover is allowed to speak first.
- 2) Direct all comments to the chairperson.
- 3) Keep to the time limit for speaking.
- 4) You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.
- 5) You may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote.

Putting the question

- 1) The chair asks, “Are you ready for the question?”
- 2) If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken. The chair announces the results.
- 3) Or motion for previous question may be adopted.

(Adapted from “The a-b-c’s of Parliamentary Procedure,” pages 10 and 11)

Tip!

Try using a motion form to make your meetings run more smoothly. Reproduce this form and distribute the copies at meetings. Ask members to complete a form and submit it to the presiding officer when they want to make a motion.

<p>MOTION: ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL, INC., OF _____</p> <p>Meeting of _____ Date _____ No. _____</p> <p>I move that</p> <p>Signed by _____</p> <p>Seconded by _____</p> <p>Motion: <input type="radio"/> Passed <input type="radio"/> Lost <input type="radio"/> Tabled <input type="radio"/> Amended (see No. _____)</p>

**Amending
the motion**

The question heard most frequently from club members is, “How do I make amendments? What do I say?” Here are some of the most common methods of making amendments:

Adding— “I move to amend the motion by adding the word(s)...” (at the end of a motion).

**Striking
(omitting)—** “I move to amend the motion by striking the word(s) (or sentence or paragraph)...”

Substituting— “I move to amend the motion by substituting the following... ”

**Striking and
substituting—** “I move to amend the motion by striking the word(s)... after the word... and substituting the word(s) (or sentence or paragraph)...”

Inserting— “I move to amend the motion by inserting the word(s) (or sentence or paragraph)... before the word...”

The presiding officer reads the motion as it would be after the addition of the amendment. It is important for people to know what they are being asked to consider.

Always begin your amendment with the words, “I move to amend the motion” so that people are aware of your intent.

You may move to amend an amendment, but only one such amendment can be on the floor at any one time.

As is true with any motion, be prepared to speak to your motion.

A quick look

When a meeting is held, parliamentary procedure is essential. The following guide may be very helpful.

A QUICK LOOK AT PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE					
Your member may request to	By saying	Member may interrupt the speaker?	Must it be seconded?	Is the motion debatable?	What vote is required?
Adjourn the meeting*	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until ..."	No	Yes	No	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.*	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No vote
Suspend further consideration of something*	"I move that we table it."	No	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move we vote on the previous question."	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Have something studied further	"I move we refer matter to a committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure or to a personal affront*	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	Chair decides
Request information*	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No vote
Ask for a vote by actual count to verify a voice vote*	"I call for a division of the house."	No	No	No	No vote
Object to considering some undiplomatic item	"I object to consideration of this question."	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
Take up a matter previously tabled*	"I move to take from the table."	No	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of*	"I move we reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order*	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Vote on a ruling by the chair*	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
* Not amendable					

(© 1994 Emily Kittle Morrison, adapted from "Leadership Skills," Fisher Books, Tucson, Arizona)

True or false

Here is an exercise to test your own and/or your members' parliamentary procedure skills.

- 1) The president leaves the chair during an election at which she or he is a candidate.
- 2) The president does not have to vote to break a tie.
- 3) The president should call for the negative vote when it appears that most people favor the motion.
- 4) The secretary may not vote, make motions, or participate in the discussion.
- 5) A good secretary will arrange for someone to take minutes at a meeting where she/he cannot attend.
- 6) A quorum is a majority of the members present.
- 7) Not all motions require a second.
- 8) Members of the Nominating Committee cannot be nominated for office.
- 9) The treasurer's report is adopted by a majority vote.
- 10) A tabled motion does not come up automatically later in the meeting.
- 11) It is not necessary to have a motion to adjourn.
- 12) Minutes can be amended at any future meeting.
- 13) A second means that the member approves the motion.
- 14) Minutes which are not read at a meeting should be read at the next meeting.
- 15) Bylaws can be set aside by a 2/3 vote.
- 16) You can not bring action on a motion by calling out "question."
- 17) After a lengthy discussion, it is easiest to simply say, "I so move" to place a motion on the floor.

(answers on reverse)

**Answers to true
or false**

- 1) FALSE: The only time the president leaves the chair is to enter in the discussion of pending business.
- 2) TRUE: No member can be forced to vote.
- 3) TRUE: A member should have the privilege of voting “no.”
- 4) FALSE: The privileges of membership are retained by all officers.
- 5) FALSE: Appointing a secretary “pro tem” should be done at the meeting by the president with the consent of the members.
- 6) FALSE: The quorum for a meeting is established in the bylaws.
- 7) TRUE: A motion coming from a committee does not require a second.
- 8) FALSE: Unless it is stated as such in the bylaws.
- 9) FALSE: The treasurer’s report is not adopted, it is filed as a record.
- 10) TRUE: A member must move to remove it from the table.
- 11) TRUE: This is one of the assumed motions. The chair need only say, “If there is no further business, this meeting is adjourned.”
- 12) TRUE: A member may bring a correction to the attention of the group for approval.
- 13) FALSE: It only means that the member wants to hear discussion on the motion.
- 14) TRUE: They are handled at the next meeting in the same manner as any minutes would be.
- 15) FALSE: Bylaws can never be set aside.
- 16) TRUE: This is not a motion and need not be recognized as such. A person wishing an immediate vote on a motion should “move the previous question.”
- 17) FALSE: This is not a motion and is almost impossible to restate or record in the minutes.