



## **How To Run A Meeting (Revision date 1/13/2013)**

No matter what kind of meeting you are having there are rules that, if followed, will ensure that you have accomplished your goal for the meeting. It does not matter if you are having a “board” meeting of your core group of leaders or a general session meeting addressing hundreds of individuals; certain protocol is necessary.

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

This is a meeting with a specific group of members who make decisions on behalf of the group or organization. Meetings of the board are usually only open to members of the board or invited guests. I caution you not to open your board meetings to the public unless you want chaos.

### ***Conducting your board meeting:***

Having by-laws makes the structure of your meetings more efficient than if you run it by the seat of your pants.

### ***The Facilitator***

The role of the facilitator may be called “president” or “coordinator,” which ever you are most comfortable with. Even grassroots groups need structure or there is chaos. Whoever your facilitator is, their job should be spelled out in your by-laws.

Your facilitator works behind the scenes and may work with outside individuals that influence your group such as speakers or other conservative leaders. He/she should be prepared to report to the board about any of those meetings.

- The facilitator should preside over each meeting. If they need to be absent, then another can be chosen to lead at that meeting.
  - Have an agenda and stick to it.
  - Start on time.
    - This is critical. If you always wait for the “late” one, you are telling the others that arrive on time that they are not as important as the one who is always late.
- They serve as the official representative of your group.
- Usually is the one to report to the general session meeting the direction and plans of your group.
- Signs documents on behalf of the group.
- Prepares the agenda and/or works with the secretary to do so.
- Calls meetings to order ON TIME.
  - Determines that a quorum is present.
  - Follows the agenda, allowing for input from all members.
  - Expedites business.
  - Processes all motions and votes.
  - Conducts a fair and equitable meeting.
  - Adjourns the meeting when all new and old business is completed.

### ***The Secretary***

- The Secretary does more than take minutes.
  - He/she is the official record keeper of the organization.

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- Keeps a record of the minutes and distributes them to the board members prior to each meeting.
- Maintains copies for audit by the state or IRS.
- Keeps a record of its list of members.
- He/she has the governing documents.
- Your secretary should have a copy of the last meetings minutes at each meeting and before you begin your new business, these minutes must be approved by a majority.
  - If corrections need to be made it can be done with a motion and then move on to current business.

### **The Treasurer**

- The Treasurer is where the “buck” stops. The size of your group will determine the scope of the treasurer's responsibilities and should be spelled out in your by-laws.
  - Your treasurer is the custodian of the funds of your group.
    - The president or coordinator should be removed from the funds.
      - This is a protection to him/her.
    - Your treasurer should always be prepared to give a current report to the entire board and provide a monthly Profit & Loss statement.
    - Balancing the books is critical for when the IRS comes knocking on your door.
  - The treasurer will receive the monies and disburse that money according to the instructions of your by-laws and/or board members.
  - Your Treasurer should be involved in preparing your groups budget. I know what you are thinking: “Why have a budget when we never know what income we will have?” Glad you asked!
    - If you have no plan for any funds that come in, you will squander what little you do have.
    - With no budget there is not control (hence, our Federal Government).
    - Whether you bring in thousands a month or under \$100, you need to have a budget.
      - How much is your meeting facility?
        - Printing?
        - Office expenses?
        - Events?
  - If you do not have viable records, you are setting yourself up for trouble with the IRS.
    - He/she will keep accurate records and report regularly to the membership.

### **Conducting a General Session Meeting**

Conducting a General Session meeting should be done with care, integrity, and professionalism. You should be ready to go before people arrive.

It is important to have some of the following things in place prior to individuals entering your meeting room or hall:

- A table with information and a person staffing the table to answer question.
  - Sign-up sheets.
  - Brochures about your group.
  - Important flyers with information about events important to your members.
  - Donation bucket.



- Merchandise for donations.
  - Be sure that you have “seed” money to make change.
  - Have a sign that tells them what they get for their donation amount.
- Have a flag already hung for your pledge.
- Have your audio equipment ready to go.

Be sure that you start on time! If you wait for stragglers to find their way in 15 minutes late, you send a signal that those who respect your time frame are not as important as those who come in late.

Years ago, I was asked to lead a large women’s inner-denominational bible study. It was to start a 9:00 AM. Women would arrive about 30 minutes early to chat and enjoy a cup of coffee in the foyer.

The first week, promptly at 9:00, I was ready to start. Over half of the women were still in the foyer. I went out and asked them all to come in.

The next week, at 9:00, I began, even though more than half were still outside. When they heard us start, they all scampered in. They were never late again.

When people know you are punctual and keep your word by starting on time, they will get there. For those who are always late, they will always be late. Do not disrespect others by making them wait for the latecomers. They will always be with us.

### ***When planning your meeting:***

- Have an agenda
  - Do your announcements prior to the guest speaker.
  - Be interesting and do not “read” your announcements.
    - Do not be laborious with too many announcements.
    - Do not let others who may do a report go too long. You want to have them wanting more, not counting the seconds before it is over.
  - Have your guest speaker lined up and there early.
    - Keep them to your time frame.
    - If they go over, give them the “time done” sign and walk up to where they are speaking.
    - If you allow Q & A, you also need to control that and end on time.
      - If they want to chat with the speaker on their own time after the meeting, they can (if the speaker does not have to leave).
- Begin and end your meeting on time (do I say that a lot?).
- Give them a “teaser” for the next meeting.
- Before you leave your meeting hall:
  - Leave it cleaner than when you arrived.
    - Haul your trash away yourself.
    - Check the restrooms.
  - Leave within the time frame you have agreed to with the “landlord.”

Some of this may seem like “common sense,” and it really is. However, if you are new to leadership, it is important that you understand the basics of leading meetings.



I highly recommend (though very dull reading) “Robert’s Rules – Complete Idiot’s Guide” as a resource. It is the most complete book you will find to help you with your leadership skills in running meetings.