

Organizing Your Team:

How to Run an Effective Meeting

We've all been there - stuck in boring, seemingly pointless meetings. Now, it's up to you to organize a meeting that will not only move your team closer to achieving its goal(s), but also keep your team awake, involved, and invested in the meeting.

Set an Agenda

- **Announce your meeting in advance.** You can use doodle.com to help you select a date. Pick a venue where people can see and hear each other.
- **What are the goals of this meeting?** Prepare a clear agenda and circulate beforehand with any action items from previous meetings. This is a *must* so participants know the purpose of the meeting and can use meeting time to ask questions, make decisions, etc.
- **Note how much time each item should take** so you don't spend too much time on any one issue.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Daly City Cool Cities Team
August 2, 2013, 7:00-8:30pm
Pointe Pacific Community Room

- Welcome and introductions (10 min)
- Action items from last mtg (5 min)
- Recycling & Composting - (10 min)
- Housing and Planning - (10 min)
- Public Education - (10 min)
- Review new action items (5 min)

Tips for Facilitating your Meeting

- **Ask for input on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting** to get group buy-in for the upcoming discussions.
- **Assign a note taker** - The person facilitating the meeting should not be the one taking minutes.
- **Never forget the main reason for meetings** - The only good reason to have meetings is to accomplish something together that you can't do better alone. Meetings have three primary purposes: communicating, administering, and deciding. Of these, the first and last are most worthwhile. However, the focus of all three types of meetings should be action.
- **Be present; no meeting "runs itself."** Lead people through each segment of the agenda and work for a decision or action for each item. Make room for people to contribute and show people you value their time and opinions.
- **Always know what time it is** - Out of respect for the commitment of all attendees, meetings should never run over the time allotted. Let people out early when possible. If meetings are longer, add breaks to keep people energized.
- **Allow conflict** - If the team is trying to solve a problem, then conflict is inevitable. Welcome this, but recognize when emotions get too high. Step in when needed to keep the meeting on track.
- **Record action items** and hold people accountable for these at the next meeting.
- **Make it fun!** Host a potluck, hold the meeting in an interesting place, etc.

Taking Minutes

Minutes capture the essential information of a meeting – decisions and assigned actions. Ideally there is someone besides the person running the meeting who is responsible for taking minutes.

- **Before the meeting:** Create a template for recording minutes. Include date/time, attendees, agenda items, action items, and decisions made.
- **During the meeting:** Focus on the discussion and record decisions and action items as they happen. If you don't understand something, ask for clarification.
- **After the meeting:** Type your notes while the information is fresh in your mind and send to team leaders for review. Send the final copy of the minutes to the entire team within 1-3 days of the meeting.

SAMPLE MINUTES

Sustainable Land Use Committee

July 8, 2013, 5:00 – Cheryl's home

In attendance: Gita Dev, Gladwyn d'Souza, Bonnie McClure, Marshall Loring, David Crabbe, Cynthia Hua

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm

1. SLU Guidelines

This is an objective way that developers and cities can learn what Sierra Club's priorities are for projects and makes our endorsement process easier for ConsCom and ExCom. A project needs at least 50 points to be considered for endorsement

2. Review San Carlos Transit Village

Total points: 45 Recommendations: Bike parking, Unbundle parking, Electric car stations.

3. Review New Action Items

- New members: attend next planning commission meeting, report back next month
- Gladwyn and Bonnie draft letter to the developer and resolution to ConsCom regarding the San Carlos Transit Village
- Megan, Cynthia, Lynette: search for SLU Liaison for San Mateo
- Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm

4. Next Meeting: August 10, 10am – Gladwyn's home