

QUICK TIPS

MEETING PROBLEMS

When managers and professionals were polled on the specific problems they encountered when conducting or participating in meetings, there were 1,305 examples cited. Sixteen of them account for 90% of all problems. They are:

1. Getting off the subject
2. No goals or agenda
3. Disorganized
4. Ineffective leadership and/or lack of control
5. Time wasted
6. Not effective in making decisions
7. No pre-meeting orientation
8. Meeting too lengthy
9. Poor or inadequate preparation
10. Inconclusive
11. Irrelevance of information discussed
12. Starting late
13. Interruptions
14. Rambling, redundant or digressive discussion
15. Individuals dominate discussion
16. No published results or follow-up actions

Source: We've Got to Start Meeting Like This, Roger Mosvick and Robert Nelson, Scott Foresman and Company

**LEADER
BITS** are available on the following topics:

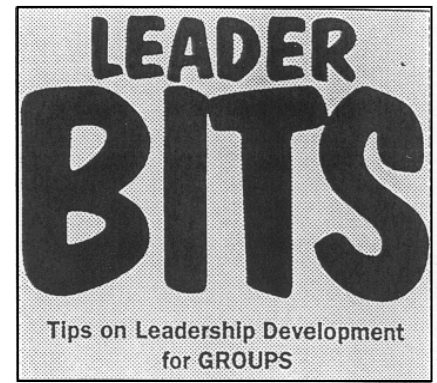
- Advising Groups
- Agendas
- Assertiveness
- Brainstorming
- Co-Sponsorship with Other Groups
- Communication
- Community Service
- Conflict Resolution
- Constitution/Bylaws
- Delegation
- Difficult Members
- Elections
- Ethics
- Evaluation Series
 - Group Performance*
 - Individual Performance*
 - Meeting Evaluation*
 - Program/Event Evaluation*
- Financial Series
 - Budgeting Organization Money*
 - Corporate Sponsorship*
 - Fundraising*
- Getting Involved
- Goal Setting
- Group Dynamics
- Icebreakers
- Marketing Your Leadership Skills
- Meetings
- Minutes from Meetings
- Motivation
- Newsletters
- Officer Transition
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Program Planning
- Public Speaking
- Publicizing Events
- Recognition
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Retreats
- Starting an Organization
- Stress Management
- Team Building
- Time Management
- University Events

**LEADER
BITS**

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SILC staff offers programs and consultation in these and other areas of personal and organizational leadership.

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Meetings have several functions. They give members a chance to discuss and evaluate goals and objectives, keep members updated on current events, provide a chance to communicate, keep the group cohesive, and allow the group to pool resources for decision-making. The following are a few tips to help make your meetings successful, productive and FUN!

BEFORE THE MEETING:

- Define the purpose of the meeting. If you can't find a purpose, don't have a meeting.
- Develop an agenda with officers and advisor(s).*
- Distribute the agenda, background material, and lengthy documents or articles prior to the meeting so members will be prepared and feel involved and up-to-date.
- Choose an appropriate meeting time. Set a time limit and stick to it, if possible.
- Arrange the room so members face each other (if possible), like in a circle or semi-circle. For large groups, try U-shaped rows.
- Choose a location suitable to your group's size. Small rooms with too many people get stuffy and create tension.
- Use visual aids (poster, diagrams) for interest. Post a large agenda up front for members to refer to.
- Vary meeting places if possible to accommodate different members. Be sure everyone knows where the next meeting will be held.

DURING THE MEETING:

- Greet members and make them feel welcome.
- Serve refreshments if possible; they are good icebreakers and make members feel comfortable.
- Start on time. End on time.
- Review the agenda and set priorities for the meeting.
- Stick to the agenda.
- Encourage group discussion to get all points of view.
- Encourage feedback.
- Keep conversation focused on the topic.
- Keep minutes for future reference in case a problem or question arises.
- Be a role model by listening and showing interest, appreciation and confidence in members.
- Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting on a positive note.
- Set date, time, and place for next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING:

- Write up and distribute minutes within 3 or 4 days.
- Discuss any problems during the meeting with officers and advisor(s); come up with ways to improve.
- Follow up on delegation decisions. Check to see that members understand and carry out responsibilities.
- 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.

* Check out the Leader Bits sheet on Agendas.

Source: University of Michigan Student Organization Development Center handout

An Effective Meeting has the following:

Desired outcomes	Agenda
Clear purpose	Good use of time
Clear roles of individuals	Preparation
Room set up	Unbiased leader
Decision-making power	Total involvement
Process tools	Real issues
Shared responsibility	Diverse opinions
Follow-up accountability	Evaluation