



## Leading a Meeting

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### For Chapter Leaders of Meeting Professionals International

Leading a meeting can be challenging, but less so if you are prepared. Here are some guidelines to follow.

1. **Be prepared.** Know the purpose of the meeting (objectives), have an agenda ready and distributed in advance (at least three days) and make an effort to discuss issues with people in advance if you think they will be controversial.
  - Ask for agenda contributions at least one week in advance
  - Distribute the agenda at least three days – and preferably more – in advance so others can also prepare (See “*Creating an Agenda*” in this *Toolbox*).
  - If a board meeting and if using a consent agenda (See “*Consent Agendas*” in this *Toolbox*), make sure that board reports go out in advance with the agenda so everyone has a chance to read them.
2. **Begin on time.** If you don’t, you have lost some control. It also takes away from the importance of the issues you will be discussing and is disrespectful to other people’s time.
3. **Be positive.** If you can create a positive climate based on respect, trust, interaction and sharing of information, then people will be more inclined to participate.
4. **Use the agenda.** The agenda is a tool to keep the meeting on track and on time (see “*How to Create an Agenda*” in this *Toolbox*), and can help you manage any conflict that might arise. Use Robert’s Rules if necessary (see “*Handling Motions*” in this *Toolkit*), or at least a set of ground rules that the group has agreed to (see “*Ground Rules for Effective Meetings*” in this *Toolkit*)
5. **Be a Facilitator.** Your role as leader is to facilitate the discussion, not overpower it. Especially if you are the President or President Elect of the Chapter, good management means listening. In addition, as President, you DO NOT HAVE A VOTE, so one way to influence is to be a good facilitator and make sure the right questions get asked. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.
6. **Confront Issues.** Ask questions to clarify rather than let issues simmer unchecked.
7. **Look for Non-Verbal Input:** Sometimes you can gauge reaction from non-verbal signs. Be prepared to notice this and facilitate the conversation based on non-verbal clues.
8. **Summarize.** After each issue is discussed, briefly summarize the result and any action items to be taken. Specify by whom.
9. **End on Time.** This is respectful of everyone’s time.