

# Conducting Meetings



## Acknowledgements

This module has been written by Christopher Auld and Graham Cuskelly, both from the School of Leisure Studies, Griffith University, Brisbane. Particular thanks go to them for the considerable work involved in producing this publication. In addition, thanks are due to the reviewers, Dianne Cowan from the Australian Sports Commission; all the state departments of sport & recreation VIP coordinators; and all those people who generously devoted time and effort to provide feedback and comments on draft modules.

© Australian Sports Commission 2000 ISBN 1 74013 025 1 This work is copyright. It has been reproduced in this edition with the permission of the Australian Sports Commission.

Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced without written permission of the Australian Sports Commission. Requests and enquires concerning reproduction should be directed to: Publication Services Manager Australian Sports Commission PO Box 176 Belconnen ACT 2616

## Contents

Types of meetings .....	2
Typical meetings in sport and recreation organisations .....	3
Committee Meetings.....	4
Meeting Procedures.....	5
Reaching a decision .....	8
Chairing Meetings .....	9
The Secretary in meetings .....	9
Improving meetings through better listening.....	11
Conflict in meetings.....	12
Meeting effectiveness checklist.....	13
Summary.....	14
Glossary.....	14

## Introduction

Meetings are an essential part of running any sport and recreation organisation. Conducting meetings so that they run smoothly and accomplish what they are supposed to is not as easy as it sounds, but neither is a well-managed meeting an elusive goal. A well-managed meeting can encourage coordination between sport and recreation organisation members because people can be made aware of changes and developments across the organisation.

Meetings can also play a role in developing team spirit, as members and other volunteers feel a part of changes and plans that they have helped to formulate. Meetings are especially useful for solving problems. Many difficulties are better handled by a meeting than by individuals, and some can be solved only by group action. However on the other hand, meetings that are not well run can be both a source of frustration for participants and a cause of organizational inefficiency.

The purpose of this module is to:

- identify a variety of meeting types
- examine the process of conducting meetings
- explain the common procedures that occur within meetings
- explain how to develop active listening skills to facilitate more effective meetings
- consider a range of decision-making methods

## Types of meetings

Different situations require different kinds of meetings. Depending on the problem to be solved, the type of business to be transacted, the nature of the group and style of leadership, a sport and recreation organisation may conduct meetings that could include formal management committee meetings, informal decision-making sessions, meetings to give instructions to staff where little discussion is required, and small task group meetings to solve very specific problems.

The purpose of a meeting should determine what type of meeting should be conducted. As the goals of the meeting vary, so too should its structure, processes and leadership.

### Alternative meeting purposes, structures and leadership

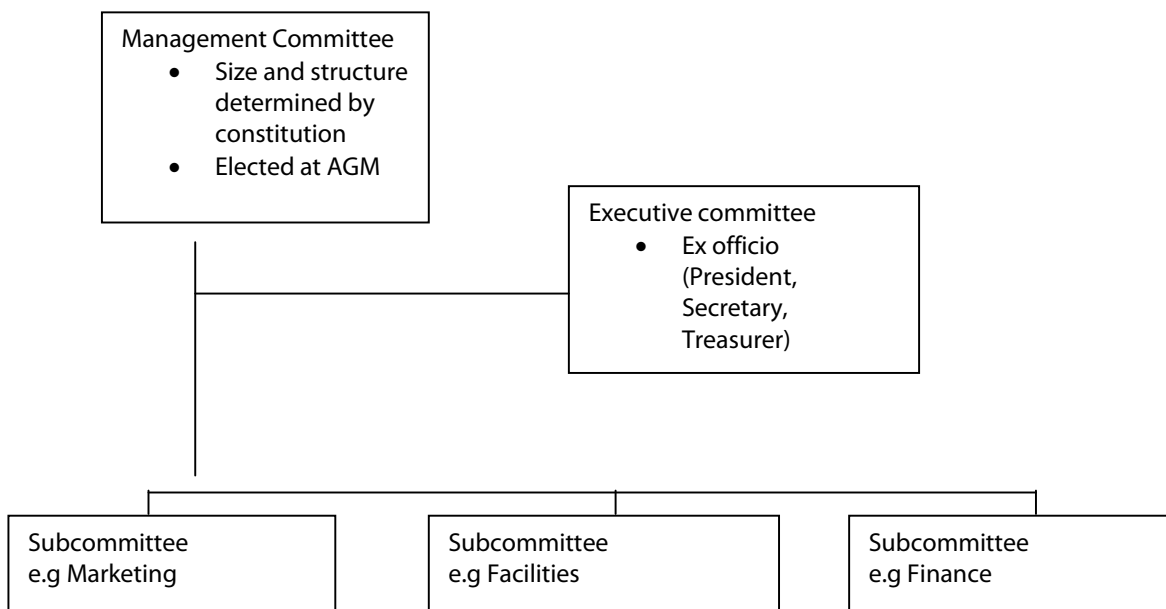
Purpose	Structure and Leadership Style
1. Getting agreement with minimal discussion	Leaders "tell" the group what to agree on and how to agree. Direct influence is exerted by those who hold most power. Rules and traditional procedures are used to restrict the right of speech to approved group members.
2. Getting agreement by majority vote.	Analysis of facts and discussion is allowed, but only of "approved" agenda items. Discussion is restricted by use of personal power, authority, formality, manipulation, pressure and other ways. Leaders "direct" or "chair" discussion. Resulting vote is not truly democratic.
3. Reaching decisions and solving problems using consultative format.	Open discussion is held, with unrestricted presentation of facts and opinions, followed by open debate. Leader can vary level of control to help encourage or limit discussion. Leaders join group as participating members.
4. Getting approval for decisions already made, but in which members need to give full support if the project is to succeed.	Members put forward ideas and suggestions. This is where a consensus is most likely to be achieved. Leaders "sell" the idea of teamwork and cooperation, but allow the group to play a part in deciding how the decision will be implemented.
5. Developing new ideas, encouraging creative thinking, planning, consulting and investigating.	Open and informal discussions have few constraints other than time limits. Leaders "consult" with the rest of the group. Leaders do need to work hard to make sure the group sticks to the topic.
6. Organising, getting the job done, delegating tasks.	There is limited discussion, but wide opportunity for questions and answers on details. Those with the highest level of responsibility for results tend to control the discussion. Leaders "tell" or "sell" according to type of project.
7. Developing team spirit and goal setting.	Open and informal discussion centres on what the sport and recreation organization should be aiming for. Leadership is still needed, but leaders should participate rather

than dominate.

## Typical meetings in sport and recreation organisations

Given the constitutional requirements and typical organisational structures (see Figure 1), meetings in sport or recreation organisations are vital for the maintenance of effective communication and democracy. The purpose of meetings is not only to share ideas and to reach a common agreement among members, but also to make decisions and appoint the right people to carry out these decisions.

**Figure 1: Typical club committee structure**



There are several different types of meetings that an organisation may conduct and they are commonly outlined in the constitution. The basic types of meetings are:

### **General meetings including annual general meetings (AGM), and special or extraordinary general meetings.**

These meetings are open to all members. General meetings are normally conducted annually but occasionally may be held to deal with specific issues (eg when a vital matter arises and needs urgent discussion by the whole club). The constitution should specify how, when and why annual and extraordinary meetings should be held and other conditions such as those associated with items of business (eg introducing a motion). AGMs provide the opportunity to present annual reports and statements (including financial statements), the purpose of which is to indicate activities for the previous 12 months or other suitable time frame. Election of officers and changes to the constitution are also carried out at the AGM.

### **Management or executive committee meetings.**

Both usually meet monthly. These involve only elected or appointed decision makers. Non-profit organisations are authorised by their constitution to form a smaller executive committee to function on behalf of its management committee. The executive committee is always a standing committee. It may review or prepare management committee meeting agendas to ensure all matters coming before the committee are relevant and appropriate. It may also interpret

management committee policies to staff, oversee policy implementation, and refer questions to other committees or to the full management committee. It reports its activities at each management committee meeting.

## **Subcommittee meetings.**

These meetings are held to focus on a specific problem or task (eg marketing, facilities). Each subcommittee should regularly present a report on its activities to the management committee. Progress reports presented at meetings are an important device for keeping members informed of each other's activities. Subcommittees do not always have decision-making power. In this case, decision making occurs at management committee meetings based on the findings and recommendations of subcommittees.

It is impossible to run a sport and recreation organisation smoothly without holding these meetings. There is no need for all members to attend all meetings; this is both impossible and inefficient. Usually the bulk of the members only attend the AGM, where they elect a committee to look after their interests for the rest of the year.

## **Committee Meetings**

The most common type of meetings in sport and recreation organisations are committee meetings. Committees operate at several levels within sport and recreation organisations and may include management committees and different types of subcommittees (see Figure 1). A group that deals with the same issues over an extended period and occupies a fixed place in the organisational structure is usually called the management committee.

The constitutions of most sport and recreation organisations require the establishment of a management committee although the membership and make-up of those committees may vary from organization to organisation. In sport and recreation organisations, management committees have an overall governance role. Consequently, it is important the committee maintains an awareness of the need for accountability to the membership of the organisation. Furthermore, management committees need a balanced turnover in order to get 'new blood' and avoid becoming too cohesive.

Subcommittees are usually appointed by the management committee to conduct detailed investigations into specific topics (see the *Committee Management* module). There are various types:

- standing committees – permanent eg finance, volunteer coordination
- short-term subcommittees – short-term authority to make decisions on specific issues
- task groups – short term but no decision making authority.

In general, committee meetings can be an extremely useful type of meeting, but they can also reduce initiative and ideas if not properly managed (eg 'committees are groups of people who keep minutes but waste hours'). Committee meetings can be effective at a wide range of tasks ranging from deciding organisational policy and fixing major problems to making changes in daily routines.

Committee meetings are at their best when:

- a wide collection or coverage of information is required before a sound decision can be made
- the judgment of a group of qualified people is needed for important decisions
- regular and continuing coordination with different groups is needed
- problems require discussion and solution
- specialist decisions have been delegated to experts, and coordination is required to produce a balanced result.

Committees have been demonstrated to be least effective in the following situations:

- if there are not the necessary qualifications or technical skills within the organisation to make adequate decisions
- if there is no specific job for it to do, or no clear goals
- if there are time constraints.

## Meeting Procedures

There is a relatively stable set of procedures that occur within any formal meeting (often called 'standing orders'). These include motions, voting and taking minutes. This level of structure and formality is useful as it:

- provides a framework within which to conduct the meeting
- helps people overcome anxieties
- helps ensure democracy
- can minimise argument and division.

Meeting procedures are set up to:

- improve efficiency in the conduct of the business of the meeting while protecting the rights of members present
- enable every person in the meeting an equal right to be heard and have their viewpoint considered
- enable every person present to have an equal right to vote on the issues and to help make the decisions.

The responsibility for successful meetings lies with all participants - not just the Chairperson and other office bearers. Participants should be aware of the meeting procedures and stay informed of any changes. This ensures that those attending meetings, and the sport and recreation organisation, are benefiting from the meeting. Meetings can be facilitated by:

- establishing a friendly climate in the meeting room
- scheduling meetings at a regular time so members can plan ahead
- ensuring that the group understands that the task and final output are the group's joint responsibility
- encouraging every member to contribute ideas, confident that they will be treated with respect
- ensuring members know why they are present, and what and how they are expected to contribute
- sharing responsibility.

### Setting the agenda

Agendas ensure meetings are better planned and help with recording the minutes. In more formal organizations issues to be discussed are identified by the Chairperson and Secretary before the meeting and circulated to members. This allows time for members to prepare their thoughts in advance. People can raise issues to be put on the agenda by notifying the Secretary.

Informal organisations tend to construct their agendas on the spot. People raise items at the beginning of the meeting, which are then discussed in turn. This approach can encourage greater participation; however it is more difficult for people to prepare their arguments. A compromise may be to place an 'Agenda Sheet' on a convenient notice board. People can write on it items they would like raised at the next meeting. Usually the most important items should be addressed earlier in the meeting. See next page for sample agenda.

# Conducting Meetings



## Sample agenda

<b>Heading:</b>	Name of club and venue of meeting: Meeting of management committee: Date of meeting:
<b>Agenda items:</b>	
Attendance	President (name) Secretary (name) Members of committee (names)
Apologies	Names
Minutes of the previous meeting	Moved that the minutes of the meeting held (date) be confirmed as a correct record
Matters arising from the minutes	eg tasks that should have been completed
Correspondence	Inwards/outwards
Reports	eg finance, facilities, Volunteer Coordinator
Motions of which notice has been given	eg that the new clubhouse should be built
General business	eg issues of concern to members
Next meeting	Date, time and venue for the next committee meeting
Closure	There being no further business, the Chairperson thanks members for attending and closes the meeting at (time):

## Quorum

A meeting can be declared invalid if incorrect notice is given or if a quorum is not present. A quorum is the minimum number of people required to be present at a meeting to make decisions valid and is usually set out in the constitution (eg half of the total committee members plus one).

## Motions

The Rules of Debate require that all business be put forward as a positive statement of action called a 'motion'. A motion is a formal recommendation put to a meeting for debate and consideration. Motions increase formality and provide more structure to meetings (see 'Moving and debating motions with and without an amendment'). The following guidelines should apply when developing motions and amendments:

Motions should:

- commence with 'that'
- be quite specific
- be unambiguous
- not be worded in the first person
- not contain more than one sentence

# Conducting Meetings

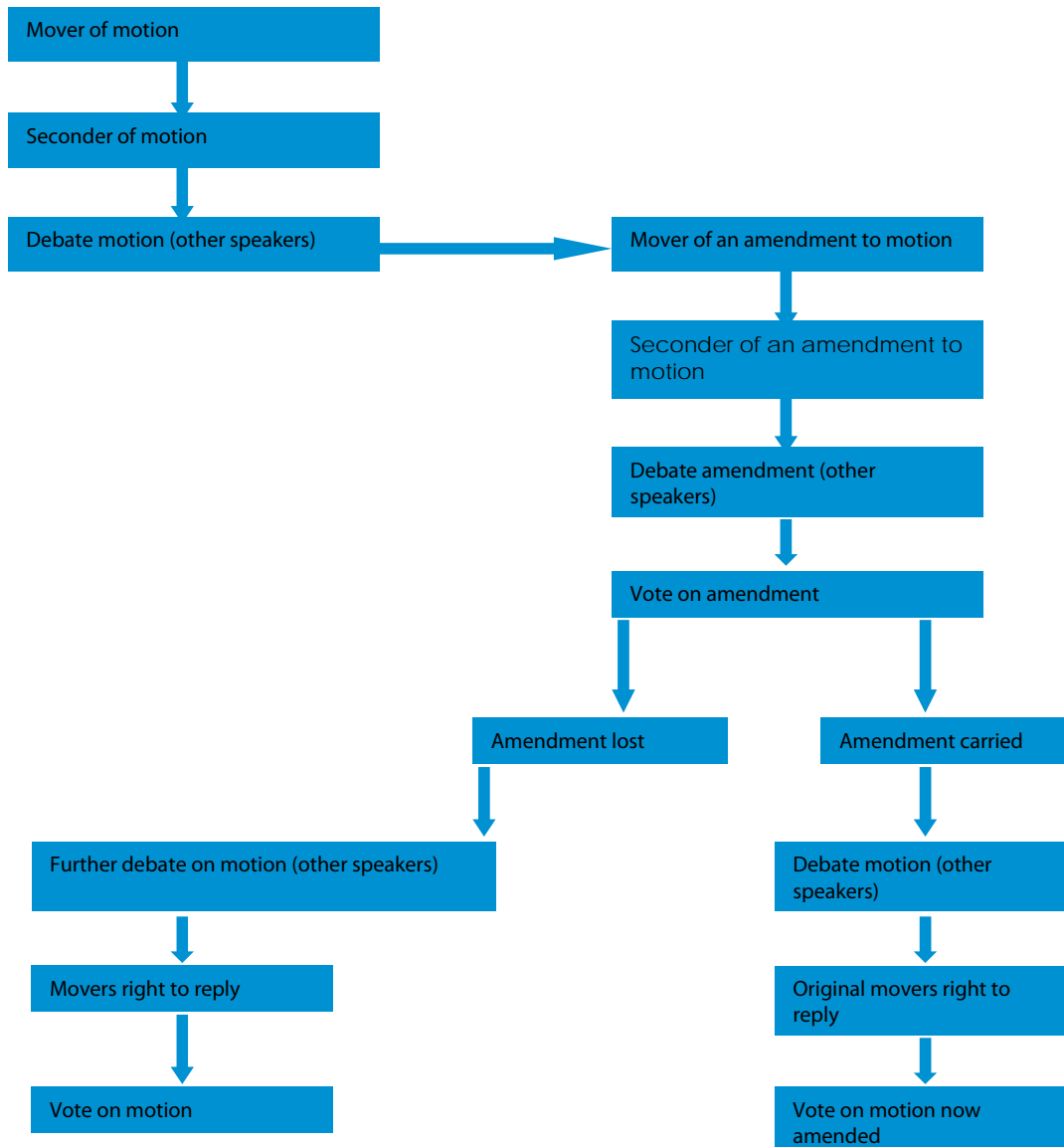


- may incorporate an explanation by way of preamble
- not attempt to revive a motion previously rejected
- may be in the negative
- preferably be submitted in writing.

Amendments should:

- commence with 'that'
- be quite specific
- be unambiguous
- be relevant to the motion
- be within the scope of the notice convening the meeting
- not contradict the motion
- not attempt to revive an amendment previously rejected
- preferably be submitted in writing.

## Moving and debating motions with and without an amendment



Motion carried or lost

Amended motion carried or lost

## Reaching a decision

Decision making is one of the key purposes of meetings. Deciding which is the ideal solution to a particular problem and how the decision will be implemented are of fundamental importance. There are a range of decision making methods, with some methods being better than others in certain situations. Two of the most commonly used methods are voting and consensus decision making.

### Voting

Voting assumes that conflict is inevitable and should be acknowledged. For example, a vote may yield a result of four members in favour of a certain decision and five against. Voting also assumes that the views of the majority should prevail. There are a variety of ways to vote. A simple vote is one where general agreement is sought among the meeting participants. Verbal voting in which participants indicate their agreement with a 'yay' or a 'nay' is a common way of reaching a decision, as is voting by a show of hands.

Some issues may require a more formal type of decision-making method. Individual and secret voting allow for these more formal decisions to be made. More complex voting procedures include voting by proxy and postal voting. The aim of these types of voting is to ensure relevant people are included in the decision-making process.

Voting has the advantage of being quick. It allows everyone to participate and reduces the likelihood of decisions being held up. The disadvantages of voting are that some members may feel ignored, creative solutions may be missed and some members may not be committed to the decision.

### Consensus

Decision making by consensus emphasizes cooperation between members. The consensus approach assumes that decision can be agreed or consented to by all members. One or two members should facilitate consensus debates. These people should state the issue clearly, direct the discussion and ensure no one is blocked from speaking. The Chairperson makes suggestions but should not try to force a decision. As the debate nears an end, the Chairperson should ask: 'Do we all agree on...[stating the issue]?'

Where there is no agreement, those who disagree should be asked to offer alternatives. Where one or two people are blocking consensus, they should be asked if they are willing to stand aside to allow the group to go ahead with the proposed action. If they stand aside, their disagreement should be recorded and they should not be expected to personally carry out the decision.

The following formal terms may be used for larger groups:

- reaching consensus – the group is willing to go ahead with the decision
- objection – when a person is unable to stand aside and let the group proceed
- reservation – when a person has a concern but will stand aside



- friendly amendment – when a person agrees with the proposal but wants words, sentences or other minor points changed.

## Chairing Meetings

The Chairperson is invested with the authority and power to direct the business and the conduct of the meeting. Prior to the meeting the Chairperson should always discuss agenda items with the Secretary and ensure that they are circulated before the meeting.

### Chairperson attributes

The Chairperson should be unbiased and impartial. They should be well informed about the purpose of the meeting and items to be covered. They must be conversant with the standing orders of the organisation, and be able to apply them in a tolerant and relaxed manner. A good Chairperson will also be a good listener, and able to keep the meeting on track. They should allow debate that is relevant to issues, and should be able to delegate tasks to other members.

The Chairperson:

- ensures that the meeting starts and finishes on time
- notes who wishes to speak, and indicates when a person may speak
- is responsible for keeping the discussion to the subject
- decides when discussion should be brought to an end
- does not usually get involved in the discussion unless their opinion is sought
- should frequently summarise the issue under discussion, to aid in decision making
- refers items to a working group for a report at the next meeting if it is apparent that a decision cannot be made.

## The Secretary in meetings

The Secretary has a wide range of tasks that take place before, during and after the meetings. They are the first contact point for many members wishing to raise issues, and coordinate links between key people. Administration is a very important aspect of the secretarial role.

Before the meeting the Secretary should:

- prepare the agenda in consultation with the Chairperson
- make arrangements for the meeting place, admission to the building and use of services, eg photocopying, catering, chairs
- send adequate notice of the meeting to all concerned
- include the venue, time, date, together with a meeting agenda
- enclose the minutes of the previous meeting if they have not already been sent.

At the AGM additional duties may include:

- collecting and collating reports from office bearers
- advising members of the meeting within a specified time
- calling for and receiving nominations for committees and other positions
- arranging for printing the completed annual report

# Conducting Meetings



- arranging for guest speakers
- arranging hospitality, venue, date and times.

The constitution of the sport and recreation organisation will set out how notice of the AGM is to be given to members. The Secretary should be fully aware of the organisation's constitution and adhere to it strictly.

## Secretary attributes

To be effective in meetings, the Secretary should be an effective communicator and a clear thinker. It is important that the Secretary be able to maintain confidentiality and be able to manage and supervise others. The Secretary should be comfortable organizing and delegating tasks.

## Taking minutes

One of the key tasks of the Secretary in committee meetings is taking minutes. When taking the minutes of the meeting, the Secretary should:

- follow the order of the agenda – this can be varied to suit a particular situation
- state the main issues, points of view put forward and decision made
- make sure the full text of motions is recorded
- be alert to take extra notes that may be needed by the Chairperson
- ensure that attendance and apologies are recorded
- list accounts for payment approved, reports received, main points of answers required for correspondence.

Between meetings the Secretary should:

- write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting
- circulate the minutes to all members as soon as possible (ideally within a week, to inform those who are absent and to remind those who have to complete particular tasks arising from the meeting)
- from the minutes, note points of action that need to be followed up in the coming weeks; having an 'action by' column down the side of the page can be useful
- make sure all important arrangements are confirmed in writing with copies made and filed; typed reports of important telephone conversations are also recommended.

## Reports

Committee and subcommittee members should be encouraged to present written reports. These reports can be either progress reports or project reports. Written reports can reduce the amount of time that is spent talking about an issue, allowing more time to be focused on other important issues. The content of the report should be succinct, addressing 'what, where, when, who and why'. The headings that are used in the report should keep the report relevant. Concluding the report with a recommendation or set of recommendations for a decision can be useful, eg 'Recommendation: That the next club championship be held over the long weekend in October'.

Properly handled, reports with firm recommendations can save a lot of time that would have been spent on discussion during meetings, and keep the focus on key decisions made by the management committee.

## Informal meetings

Informal meetings are useful when decisions have to be made in a short amount of time. Participants in informal meetings should be aware of how to formally bring an unruly meeting to order, how to participate in a formal meeting,

and how to control a hostile meeting from the chair. When chairing informal meetings or discussions the Chairperson should:

- reach agreement with the group on the aims of the meeting
- check that everyone understands the topic to be discussed
- ensure everyone listens to each other carefully and is not judgmental
- ensure only one person speaks at a time, encourage everyone to be objective and keep discussion focused on the issue at hand
- examine each option individually and objectively and reach a conclusion for that option (which should be recorded for later reference).

Voting is often not conducted as a part of informal meetings.

**A brainstorming meeting** is used when a sport and recreation organisation is trying to come up with ideas, e.g. for a project, event or promotional strategy. When chairing a brainstorming session the Chairperson should:

- ban all criticism of suggestions
- allow all suggestions
- ensure all suggestions are recorded so that all members can see what has been suggested
- facilitate debate on the value of each individual suggestion after all suggestions are listed
- encourage members to prioritise (order) suggestions in order of preference
- encourage the group to select their first option and proceed with planning
- delegate specific tasks for follow up.

## Improving meetings through better listening

Getting the most out of meetings is critical, especially where time or other constraints exist. Active listening is a skill that all members of the sport and recreation organisation may possess, but there are many ways of improving both talking and listening. The benefits of active listening include having people reciprocate and trying to understand others better, developing relationships within the group, getting more accurate information, having a better understanding of problems, and improving decision making.

### How can active listening be developed?

1. An individual should know why they are listening: they should have a definite purpose in mind.
2. A person should listen with their whole body: this includes non-verbal the messages that are sent without words.
3. Give feedback, respond to the person: the best listening also involves talking, as others respond verbally to what they hear. A comment which confirms that a speaker has been heard and understood is better than just a nod of the head or a 'yep'. Ideally, the question should be rephrased, and then followed by a question or comment.
4. Show empathy: active listening requires using one ear to listen to meaning and the other to listen to feelings. Show that another's point of view is understood, if not necessarily agreed with.
5. Encourage the other meeting participants: offer support for people who are shy or nervous – their contribution are important.
6. While listening, it is better not to be thinking about responses: this distracts from listening to what the content of the speaker's message is.
7. Meeting participants should try to match their mood to other people's moods unless they are negative or hostile.
8. Listen to the whole message: meeting participants should not assume they've heard it

# Conducting Meetings



all before, or that what is being said is not important.

9. Meeting participants should attempt to put the other person at ease, and then relax themselves: helping people relax encourages

them to talk. People who are impatient or stressed will listen less effectively.

10. Look for positive points: judge the message, not the person.

## Conflict in meetings

From time to time, meetings may be disrupted by conflict between members. Conflict seems to be caused by a variety of factors including individual and underlying organisational characteristics. Organisational causes of conflict may include: competition over resources, ambiguity about responsibility and reward systems. Interpersonal causes of conflict include personal grudges and poor communication.

Many people have what may be termed a traditional view of conflict. In this perspective, all conflict is viewed as negative and must be avoided. On the other hand, the current view is that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any organisation and, furthermore, is necessary for an organization to perform effectively. The presence of conflict suggests that groupthink is absent and that members are not apathetic about their involvement in decision making. However, conflict has both positive and negative outcomes. Positive outcomes include airing of previously hidden problems and discussion of alternative viewpoints; all of which encourage creativity, facilitate innovation and increase motivation and performance.

Negative outcomes include stress, communication breakdowns, attention is diverted away from goals, and a shift to authoritarian leadership styles and narrow group perspectives. Ways to manage conflict include bargaining/negotiation, mediation and arbitration, and direct intervention by the chair.

### Conflict resolution in meetings

If one member attempts to shout down or overly criticise another, there are a number of strategies that may be employed.

- The speaker could ask for a courteous hearing. 'Please be good enough to listen to my case. You may find that you agree with it...' 'It is only fair that you should listen to my argument, before you decide to disagree...'
- The speaker brings the audience onto their side by appealing to their sense of fairness. 'Madam/Sir, you are preventing others from hearing the case...' 'That's not fair, is it?' – a rhetorical question. Then someone may

# Conducting Meetings



shout out: 'Of course it is. Your argument is rubbish!' More likely, however, the people around the interrupter will demand the interrupter be quiet.

- The speaker appeals to the Chairperson to take control. 'I am in your hands, Ms/Mr. Smith. If you and the meeting wish me to continue to explain my case, I will gladly do so. But if it is your wish or the determination of the meeting that I shall not be given a fair hearing, then so be it...' The speaker then sits; Ms/Mr. Smith rises. If the meeting collapses the fault is theirs and not yours.

## Meeting effectiveness checklist

A useful way to determine if meetings are perceived to be functioning openly and effectively is offered by the meeting effectiveness checklist. The checklist provides an overall score for perceived meeting effectiveness, as well as average scores for each individual item. The higher the total score, the more effective the meeting is perceived to be. Using a five-point scale for each item, the highest score possible is 60. After a committee has met a few times, each member of the committee should complete the checklist independently by ticking the appropriate box next to each of the 12 items using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither disagree or agree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

Upon completion each member should find their total meeting effectiveness score by summing their responses for the 12 items. The total scores from each of the committee members should then be averaged to give a score that reflects how effectively the committee is perceived to be. Average scores for each of the 12 individual items can also be determined, which may be useful in identifying specific areas that need development.

Checklist (effective meetings)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Members really feel as though they are part of a committee					
2. Committee members know exactly what things have to get done.					
3. Committee members have respect for one another.					
4. Committee members have a clear idea of the organisation's goals.					
5. When the committee has a decision to make, everyone is involved in making it.					
6. Everyone's opinion gets listened to on the committee.					
7. Rarely is there bickering on the committee.					
8. The knowledge, skills and experiences of individual members are well utilised by the committee.					
9. There is a high degree of mutual trust among the members of the committee.					

# Conducting Meetings



10. Conflicts are resolved on the committee and dissenting views are not overly criticised.					
11. Committee members feel free to express their ideas about how the committee operates.					
12. The committee is focused on how to get the job done and not who is in control.					

## Summary

Meetings are an integral part of making a sport and recreation organisation run smoothly and democratically. By following meeting procedures, allowing all members an equal opportunity to contribute, and being aware of how best to contribute, meetings can be a powerful tool in solving problems and making decisions.

A sport and recreation organisation that can maximise its use of meetings has a much greater opportunity to excel in the service it provides, and to encourage a better sense of camaraderie and cooperation among members.

### Further information

Carver, J (1997) *Boards that Make a Difference. A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organisations*, 2nd edn. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Fletcher, W (1983) *Meetings, Meetings: How to Manipulate Them and Make Them More Fun*. New York: W Morrow.

Janner, G (1986) *Janner on Meetings*. Brookfield: Gower.

Roberts, J (1991) *The Committee Members' Handbook: A 'How to' and 'How Not to' for Those Who Join the Committee of a Club, Association, Council or Other Non-profit Organisation*. Melbourne: Business Library.

Smelser, NJ (1993) *Effective Committee Service*. USA: Sage Publications.

Worner, B (undated) *Telling it Straight - Reports to Committee*. Perth: WA Ministry of Sport and Recreation.

## Glossary

**Agenda.** Is the list of things to be dealt with at a meeting. Agendas help provide structure to a meeting.

**Amendment.** An alteration to a motion designed to improve it without contradicting it.

**Consensus.** Decision making by consensus emphasises cooperation between members. The consensus approach assumes that decision can be agreed or consented to by all members.

**Constitution.** The fundamental principles (laws) under which an organisation is structured and/or governed.

**Governance.** This is essentially a role of general oversight and control and can be defined as the overall guidance, direction and supervision of the organisation.

**Groupthink.** Is a by-product of the group decision-making process that usually occurs in meetings and has the potential to detrimentally affect decision making. Groupthink is related to group norms and describes situations in which group pressures for conformity deter the group from critically appraising unusual, minority or unpopular views.

**Management committee.** The key decision making committee in the organisation. A structured system of administration and management relies on the management committee. Management committees exist to make decisions and are charged with the overall responsibility for organizational governance.

**Meeting.** A gathering of persons who come together for common purposes. In the case of most sport and recreation organizations the purpose is to make decisions.

**Minutes.** The written records of the meeting. Motion. A proposed resolution put before a meeting for discussion and determination.

# Conducting Meetings



**Quorum.** A quorum is the minimum number of people required to be present at a meeting to make decisions valid and is usually set out in the constitution (eg half of the total committee members plus one).

**Short-term subcommittees.** Have the ability to make decisions over a pre-determined period about specific issues, although they must report to the management committee.

**Standing committees.** Are committees with permanent responsibilities. Examples include finance, fundraising, public relations, volunteer coordination, uniforms, selection panels, medical, coaching.

**Standing orders.** The permanent rules for regulating the business and proceedings at an organisation's meetings.

**Subcommittee.** Subcommittees are usually appointed by the management committee to conduct detailed investigations into specific topics or oversee general operational areas. They include standing committees and task groups.

**Task groups.** Have no authority to make decisions. They gather and assess information in regard to a specific issue over a relatively short time frame, then report recommendations back to the management committee.

## Endnotes

1 Nutting, J. and White, G. (1991). The Business of Communicating. Australia: McGraw-Hill.

2 Renton, N. E. (1990), Guide for Meetings (5th ed). Sydney: The Law Book Company

TA6931 Design: Creative Times Richmond Victoria Printing: SAS General Printing (Vic) Pty Ltd