



MEETINGS

- Corporate
- Community
- Government

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS IN MEETING PROCEDURES

Meetings are an important part of structured organisations, including corporate, government and community. Toastmasters' club meetings provide an ideal opportunity to develop and refine your skills in meeting procedure. If meetings are run properly, members of any organisation, including Toastmasters, will be able to take part in constructive decision making processes.

OPENING A MEETING

QUORUMS - All meetings require a quorum (minimum number of members under the rules of the organisation) to be present. Decisions made at meetings held without a quorum are not legally binding. A quorum must be present during the whole meeting. For Toastmasters clubs, a quorum is half the active members of the club.

NOTICE OF A MEETING – Many organisations usually have rules for a minimum period for notice of meetings and how members are to be notified. If you schedule a business meeting for your club, it is suggested that you notify members at the prior meeting. Clubs hold their club officer elections for the following year at the first meeting in May. This is an opportunity to combine it with a business meeting. Toastmasters' clubs need to advise members when business sessions are being programmed as part of their regular meetings.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – These are distributed by the Secretary of the organisation. If the minutes are not distributed before the meeting, members need to be given time to read the minutes before they are confirmed. Toastmasters' clubs often distribute the minutes from the club executive meetings to all club members at business sessions.

THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman is in control of the meeting and should:

- *Keep order and permit those who have something relevant to say, to speak without interruption;*
- *Know the rules and be familiar with meeting procedure and the affairs of Toastmasters International;*

Challenges to the Chairman's role usually result from an impression that control is either too lax or too dictatorial. A fair balanced handling of meetings will generally keep Chairmen out of trouble especially if they know the rules and explain how they propose to use them and seek the meeting's approval for their actions.

MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

MOVING AND SECONDING MOTIONS – Motions should be in a positive form that calls for action rather than simply making a statement. It should be quite clear who is to take the action and what action is required. All motions and amendments should be in writing wherever possible to avoid misunderstandings and must be seconded before being debated. Seconding the motion should take place immediately after the mover has read out the motion and before the mover speaks in support of it. Motions that do not have a seconder, automatically lapse.

Amendments must be clear and relevant to the original motion. If the motion before the meeting is "that the report be accepted", an amendment that proposes "that the report be not accepted" cannot be accepted by the Chair.

DEBATE

Discussion should not be allowed to carry on unnecessarily. Where possible, speakers should be taken in turn (one "for" and one "against"). Two speakers for each side of the debate is ideal, a protracted or repetitive debate should be curtailed by the Chairman.

If a member moves that the "motion be now put" or that the "vote be taken", it should be seconded and put to the vote quickly. The proposed closure of debate should be moved and seconded by persons who have not spoken in the debate. Before accepting the closure motion, the Chairman needs to be Satisfied that the matter has had reasonable discussion and that minority Views have been heard. If passed, the motion and any amendments should be put immediately after the mover of the original motion has exercised their right of reply.



MEETING PROCEDURE MADE EASY

Chairman's Typical Agenda and 'cheat sheet'

1. Quorum

Establish that there is a quorum present, being a majority of the **active** members of the Club.

2. Apologies For Non Attendance

a. Motion - "That the apologies be accepted."

b. Secunder

c. Discussion

d. Vote by members

Advance apologies for non-attendance at the next meeting. (This is merely used as a convenient method or time of tendering apologies and thus no motion should be taken for acceptance.)

3. Minutes Of Previous Meeting

a. Motion - "That the minutes be confirmed."

b. Secunder

c. Amendments/alterations to minutes as read

d. Vote by members

Business arising from minutes. It is important that the Chairman is familiar with any matter which may arise.

4. CORRESPONDENCE INWARDS

a. Motion - "That the correspondence be received."

b. Secunder

c. Vote by members

Discussion is not necessary, except possibly an amendment not to receive a particular item.

Business arising from the correspondence.

This can include a motion proposing some action as a result of a letter.

5. CORRESPONDENCE OUTWARDS

No motion is normally required, although if it is desired to approve the sending of letters then the appropriate motion is "That the correspondence be endorsed".

6. REPORTS

Before the meeting, ascertain which Officers will present reports and call upon them accordingly, e.g. President, Vice President Education, Vice President Membership, Vice President Public Relations, Treasurer, Secretary, Sgt at Arms. Unless just making an announcement about a future happening, each Officer should conclude their report with a motion "That the report be received (or adopted)" as appropriate.

a. Motion - as above

b. Secunder

c. Discussion on content of report

d. Vote by members

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

While it is preferable for motions and amendments to be submitted in writing to the Chairman, this is not essential. Motions may be accepted directly from a speaker.

Note. The following is the method of obtaining a decision on a motion:

CHAIRMAN: I will now put the motion

"That....."

"All those in favour say Aye"

Those against say No"

"I believe the Ayes/Nos have it (Pause in case someone disagrees and requests a show of hands) and I declare the motion/amendment carried/lost."

Elizabeth Wilson, DTM, May 2000

