

TIPS for PRESIDENTS

Creating Committees That Work

Club Presidents, how many committees have you served on during your Quota career? Yes....more than you can count! The business of “listening” in quota can help your club ...and your club’s committees operate more effectively (including your Board). Consider sharing these helpful tips with your committee leaders and board members:

Tip 1: Be a committee leader who listens. As Chairperson, your job is to listen intently, summarize and rephrase what you have heard as a possible direction for action. Encourage diverse viewpoints. If you feel strongly about a subject up for debate, hold your comments until all members have spoken. It’s important not to sway others’ opinions using your position as leader. Before sharing your thoughts, indicate that you are now not speaking as chairperson, but as a group member.

Tip 2: Create the perfect setting. Room set-up counts. Avoid seating arrangements that exclude people or have them sitting with their backs to others. An ideal set-up will accommodate all individuals sitting comfortably around a table. If your group is too large, seat members in a large circle or half-circle. If you plan to use small group discussions, have chairs pre-arranged into appropriate sized groups.

Tip 3: Agree on committee ground rules. Ground rules allow individuals to become responsible group members. At the beginning of a task, discuss what guidelines they feel are most important. Guide the group in forming ground rules about these issues. Avoid “telling” the group what guidelines to institute. But, you may want to have a few suggestions ready, just in case.

Tip 4: Be a leader who watches, too. Don’t ignore body language. Place yourself where you can see how many people react to suggestions, speakers’ styles and decision-making plans. Watch for facial expressions, body language or shifts in posture that indicate a strong reaction. Follow up by asking that individual for feedback.

Tip 5: Encourage everyone to participate. Be attentive to silent members. Look for physical cues that they are ready to contribute to the discussion then call for their comments. If a member consistently does not engage in group discussion, talk with them during a break. Affirm that their opinion is valuable. Also, limit overly dominant members and protect group members you feel are under attack.

Tip 6: Support all group decisions. Once the group has decided on a specific action to be taken, don’t unilaterally reverse that decision or decide to not take action. This would undermine group participation and members’ commitment to group goals.

Tip 7: Encourage others to take the lead. The most productive groups evolve when members are encouraged to share leadership in planning meetings, leading discussions, gathering data or resolving disputes. As a leader, your job is to wisely use the resources of the group. Build on the expertise members offer.