

## PUTTING PIZAZZ INTO YOUR ORGANIZATION

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Have you ever heard (or made) the comment, "This is a meeting of the bored!" or called a meeting and no one came? If either has happened to you, you may have been involved with an organization that needed to take a look at itself and its meetings.

Each of us likes to leave a meeting with something to take home: a new idea, something learned, a feeling of accomplishment, a feeling of having made our world a little better, or even a small gift. But, how often does this happen?

Good meetings don't just happen! They are carefully thought out, well-executed events that affect the way an organization operates.

Having interesting meetings means following a well-thought-out plan of moving the meeting along and adding some sparks of interest occasionally. If the leaders go too fast, the meeting may be over members' heads; if too slow, members may be bored.

There are many things that can be done to help members go home feeling they have learned something new, or in some way had a special time. You want members to want to come back because they might miss something special the next time.

### Make Meetings Fun as Well as Special

Good meetings need to be structured and controlled as well as flexible and informal to allow member participation. The most important factors in a good meeting are to have a planned agenda and to follow a time schedule.

A creative club meeting should consist of three major parts: education, business, and social. It is good to spend about one-third of the meeting time on each segment.

**Education should be fun.** One of the primary purposes of most organizations is education, and it need not be dull. Think of ways you can add a "spark" to programs and topics when you are the leader. Think of clever openings, games, involvement activities, and other things to help get your points across in a fun and educational way.

**Club meetings can be creative.** Having a planned agenda and following a time schedule are the most important factors in a good meeting. An agenda is flexible. Change it occasionally and surprise your members. A few simple changes make for variety.

The **social part of the meeting** can provide variety, too. Think about doing some of the following:

- ♥ Set meeting themes around program topics, holidays, or seasons.
- ♥ Coordinate workshops around programs, holidays, or members' interests.
- ♥ Make meetings fun, not all work. Provide members something to look forward to each time and add a spark of excitement so they will return for the next meeting.
- ♥ Have a special meeting when the group carries out its community project.

- ♥ Invite county officers to your meeting occasionally.
- ♥ Plan some special recognition at each meeting.
- ♥ Ask members to present a poem, a reading, or an anecdote.

### **Planning is the Key**

Work with the group to plan your organizational year. Set up a full-page outline and list the twelve months of the year—six on one side and six on the other. Now begin to plan: program topics (titles and leader), hostesses, holiday treats, themes, special activities, club recognition, recreation, fun spots. Put in dates, places, and people responsible. The plan will probably expand past the one page as ideas flow.

Plan the year in advance by involving all the members, including the executive committee, committee chairpersons, and others. Preplanning helps assure good meetings. Designate responsibilities in advance so thought can go into carrying out the assignments.

### **Ideas to Spark Pizazz**

- Plan so business can be done efficiently and effectively.
- Add some fun spots to meeting (game, reading).
- Use a gimmick. Every meeting use a pretty bag some way, or a music box, or an antique. A gimmick will keep members guessing how you will use it next meeting.
- Plan ways to make people feel glad they have come.

- Hold meetings at different locations.
- Have a slumber party.
- Visit another club's meeting.
- Ask members to share heritage stories; i.e., something they remember from childhood, a holiday tradition, etc. (Be sure to set a time limit.)
- Have a book review.
- Take turns doing short demonstrations.

By adding a little pizazz and carrying out the following tips you can have successful, educational and fun meetings.

- Start and finish on time.
- Know what you want to say.
- Have your materials organized and ready.
- Follow the KISS rule: keep it short and simple.
- Keep meeting lively and moving forward.
- Speak clearly.
- Be confident and enthusiastic.
- Take a break if meeting runs too long.
- Close on a positive note.
- Make sure everyone understands what has been decided.

Remember, if members work together, the creative ideas will flow and the group will flourish and grow. Never again should we hear the words, "We have always done it this way"! and the organization will be fun, as well as educational.

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