

HOW TO: Committees

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|Committees|

Your organization has a vast, mostly untapped potential power – the power to act collectively to make a difference.

True or False?

- A committee is a group that succeeds only when it is composed of three members, one of whom happens to be sick and another absent.

Discussion Points

- Committee Functions
- Committee Benefits
- Committee Structure
- Committee Operations

Functions of a Committee

Primary:

- To contribute to the efficient operation of an organization.
 - concerned with the designing and operation of a project and
 - assisting the leadership in their decision-making process by providing needed information.

Types of Committees

- **Standing Committee:** Performs a continuing function necessary for the on-going operation of the organization. Designated to **carryout the work** of the association and to make recommendations to the board.
- **Special/Ad Hoc Committee**(aka Task Forces): Generally formed to accomplish a specific objective. Their existence stems from a new or current problem or project that the organization is dealing with.

Why so *Special*?

- The job would be better suited to a special committee of members who can consider the problem, set up an action plan, make a recommendation to the board, and then dissolve.
- Because a special committee is usually faced with finding the resolution to a single problem, it often requires **more preparation and study before a decision is made.**

Why Committees?

- Effective committees...
unify, motivate, represent, serve members, coordinate, consolidate, communicate.
- Provide an important **training ground** for **future leaders.**

Why Committees?

- Committees are an **effective workforce for the organization** – they ensure **group participation** in problem solving and provide a forum for the many interests within your group.

How to Establish Committees

Appointment Process

- Annually: Board President appoints the committee leadership.
- Choose Wisely: The energy the chair puts into their work on the committee has a direct influence on the direction your organization takes.

How to Establish Committees

Committee Composition

- Criteria: Members only?
- Diversity: consider age, gender, work background, geography, ultimate skills/experience.
- Size: Smaller = fast-acting, focused
Larger = more variety & skills

Committee Operations

Committee Charge

- Clear purpose & assignment
- Start and Stop dates
- Defined Resources
- Specific Deliverables

Committee Operations

Board Representative

- Liaison/link to the board
- Leadership resource person
- Committee Oversight,
NOT involved

Committee Operations

Committee Reports

- Keep leaders fully informed
- Standardized written report
- At least 2-3 times per year
- History for incoming leaders

Committee Responsibilities

Directly responsible to the board.

Chair Responsibilities:

- Accepts and supports the committee's charge
- Attends all meeting (person, teleconference)
- Plans committee meetings and agenda
- Stays sufficiently informed of committee activity
- Maintains records and relevant committee activity
- Move members toward participation and decision-making
- Evaluates committee efforts and communicates accomplishments to the committee and leadership

Qualities of Effective Chair

Leadership

- Commands attention & inspires others
- Demonstrates ability to create positive work atmosphere
- Controls without dominating
- Understands **how** the committee fits into the larger work of the organization

Qualities of Effective Chair

Participation

- Demonstrates active participation and interest in the organization
- Has knowledge of the subject in the committee is involved
- Thinks in terms of organization goals

Qualities of Effective Chair

Administrative Skills

- Demonstrates willingness to take initiative
- Demonstrates ability and willingness to carry out responsibilities
- Supports orderly procedures for conducting work.

Qualities of Effective Chair

Communication

- Demonstrates ability to convey clear messages
- Demonstrates willingness to listen

Committee Members

Committee success depends on committee members' contributions.

- Act in good faith and in accordance with what they believe to be in the best interest of the organization.
- Discharge their responsibilities diligently and not delegate them to other committee members.
- Properly prepare for meetings and ask for clarification if any items are unclear.
- Publicly disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and not vote on such committee matters.

Summary

Your organization has a vast, mostly untapped potential power – the power to act collectively to make a difference.

Summary

- Committees are the workforce of your organization.
- Committee members must clearly understand what their purpose is, & should focus all their energy on accomplishing it.
- Committees are where your next leaders should come from.