MEETING MANAGEMENT

RESOURCE MATERIALS

July 12, 2003

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GOVERNANCE MODEL (Board Governance Planning and Training Retreat November 2002)

Authority	Function/Responsibilities

Board
- Involved as a team in decision making about governance and the w ork of the organization.
- Provide input on complex matters and may contribute individually or through task groups to particular aspects of organizational work.
- Retain accountability for organization.
- Balance interests of constituents with those of overall organization (role of Organizational Directors not the Regional Directors or Directors at large).
- Govern and oversee operations through committees.
- Standing Committee structure in the long term: financial; marketing; membership (Past President to chair one of the standing committees – need to review P.P. role).
- Ad Hoc Committee structure in the short term to complete assigned tasks and to position the organization for growth.
- Committees: process information for Executive to do the work of the organizati on.
- Executive (replaces the current Executive Committee) recommends action to the board.
- Board members can be involved in the work either in services or functions.
- Board members selected for: community profile; capacity to open doors; special skills in their area of expertise (in accordance with the bylaws of the OTC).
- The Executive and Committees used for coordinating the monitoring and auditing performance of E.D. and organization.
- Delegate management functions to Executive Director.
- The President conducts the Executive Director's annual performance review with input from the Executive.

Staff
- Primary reporting relationship to the board through the Executive.
- Involved as a team member with the board in decision making about governance and the work of the organization.
- Responsible for the management of the operations and implementing board policy.
- E.D. non-voting member of board.
- E.D. has considerable influence over policy making.
- E.D. is viewed as a full partner with the board.
- E.D. has a relatively free hand to achieve objectives set by the board.
- Responsible through a senior position who reports to the board.
- Have clearly defined duties and responsibilities directed through policy and procedures.
- Relatively free hand in achieving objectives set by o rganization.
- Play a role in potential board member identification.

RATING THE MEETING

Think back to the last three meetings you have had with this group. Respond to the questions below with the most appropriate answer.

Criteria	Almost Always 3 points	Sometimes 2 points	Almost Never 1 point
The environment is easy and comfortable even when discussing thorny issues.			
Enthusiasm and participation at meetings is high.			
New, unconventional ideas are suggested.			
Different points of view on any issue are welcome and encouraged.			
Many ideas are cultivated; none are ridiculed.			
People speak their minds.			
It is no secret where everyone stands on the issues that come up.			
There is respect for principles of others, however unpopular the view.			
Clarifying, and sometimes challenging, questions are asked in warm, non-hostile tones.			
Positions change as a result of discussions on the issues.			
Feedback is given sensitively and constructively.			
Relevant and appropriate self disclosure on any issue occurs.			
Group members build on the ideas of others, and they volunteer to help when help is warranted.			
There is a "can do" attitude.			
Group members follow through on their responsibilities			

Group Summary

1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.
7.	8.	9.
10.	11.	12.
13.	14.	15.

The closer your **individual** total point count is to 45, the more open your climate is. Review the lower **total scores** and discuss improvements that will be made.

Scoring Guidelines

Trust and Openness: #'s 1, 7, 10. The amount of safety and security one feels in giving an honest opinion and trusting these views will be valued and respected; this also looks at how open participants are to new ideas.

Morale: #'s 2, 11, 14. The feelings of confidence in the group's ability to accomplish its goals and get the job done in the face of the predictable roadblocks. There is also the sense that differences will be dealt with in sensitive and productive ways.

Responsibility: #'s 3, 6, 15. The willingness of participants to follow through on their tasks and be held accountable; also the willingness to take initiative in putting forth ideas and voicing reactions to any ideas suggested.

Support: #'s 4, 9, 13. Both emotional and task support are involved. The first shows appreciation for the person who sticks his/her neck out to say something unpopular. The latter involves taking the initiative without being asked.

Freedom: #'s 5, 8, 12. A real tolerance for differences without fear of recrimination or ostracism; the feeling that you can be honest about ideas or reactions and it won't cost you your relationships or opportunities.

IS A MEETING NECESSARY?

Meeting Options Matrix

Criteria	Options		
	No Meeting – Take Personal Action	**Communicate or Meet Selectively**	**Convene a Group Meeting**
Available Time	Only you are available	Few people available	All are available
Decision Authority	You alone have authority	You share authority with others	Entire group has authority
Further Information	You have all the information	More information could be helpful	All others have necessary or helpful information
Judgmental Aid	Need no help	Other's help/input nice to have	Other's input helpful or necessary
Involvement or Commitment	No one else involved	Some others need to be involved	Broad commitment desired/needed
Implementation of Ideas and Action	No one else involved	Some others will be implementing	Entire group will be involved
Full Understanding of Subject	Only you need to understand	Some others must understand	All others must understand
Learning or Training Opportunity	None needed	Some need training	Entire group needs training
Problem Analysis	Your own view is adequate	Other's views and expertise helpful	All other views and group synergy needed
Conflict Resolution	No conflict exists	Isolated conflict between few people	Broad group conflict must be resolved
Team Building	None needed	Some people need help	Entire group needs to improve

MEETING CONSIDERATIONS – THE KEY QUESTIONS BEFORE IT HAPPENS

1. What are the needs, interests and exp ectation of the participants?

2. What is the agreed upon purpose of the meeting? (to train, inform, plan, decide, etc)

3. What are the desired outcomes from the meeting?

4. What materials are needed to facilitate the meeting? (and who will handle them – agenda, handouts, visual aids, etc)

5. Are additional resource people needed? (who, who will contact them)

6. What activities can best be used to achieve the stated goal? (brainstorming, survey, discussion, buzz sessions, etc)

7. Is there enough time beforehand fo r everyone to prepare adequately?

8. How much time will be needed to deal with the issues? (agenda should be planned with consideration for this)

9. What commitments do you seek and from whom?

10. What background information needs to be circulated to the parti cipants?

11. What do I think will be the key issues arising from discussion and how to deal with them?

12. Where could the meeting most effectively take place? (home, office, conference room, on site, etc)

13. Who will be responsible for room arrangements, refre shments, clean up etc? (secure commitment)

14. What form of minute taking will be most effective?

AGENDA PLANNING WORKSHEET

Committee/Group: _____

Meeting Date: _____   **Location:** _____

Time: (from-to) _____   **Chair:** _____

Recorder: _____   **Timekeeper** _____

<u>Topic/Item</u>   **<u>Person Responsible and Duration</u>**

_____

Desired Outcomes

_____

_____**Report Attached** ☐

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Desired Outcomes

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_____**Report Attached** ☐

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Desired Outcomes

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_____**Report Attached** ☐

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Desired Outcomes

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Desired Outcomes

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Desired Outcomes

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_____**Report Attached** ☐

SAMPLE AGENDA FORMAT

XYZ Service Organization

Board of Directors Meeting
July 12, 2003

AGENDA

9:00 a.m.
1. **Introduction**
   1.1 Welcome new member – Jim White
   1.2 Purpose of meeting, objectives, expected outcomes

9:15 a.m.
2. **Adoption of minutes – May 12, 2003**
   2.1 Errors and omissions only
   2.2 Motion to accept

9:20 a.m.
3. **Updates/Announcements/Housekeeping**
   3.1 New service provider competitor
   3.2 Others from the floor
   3.3 Estimated time of adjournment

9:30 a.m.
4. **Items for discussion:**

9:30 a.m.
   4.1 New staff position – President Peters
   Discussion: Review of consultant organizational review report and annual budg et (report attached) to determine need and general scope of duties.
   Decision required: approval to proceed with hiring or abandon position.

10:30 a.m.
   4.2 Vehicle purchase – Executive Director
   Discussion: Review E.D. report (attached) outlining future use, p urchase cost and budget availability.
   Decision required: approval of purchase based on recommendations in the report.

11:00 a.m.
   4.3 Review of strategic plan – President Peters, Executive Director
   Discussion: Presentation of highlights of strategic plan (exe cutive summary attached) and question and answer period, submission of revisions.
   Decision required: approval in principle of the direction contained in the plan noting new areas for future discussion and/or inclusion in the final report.

11:30 a.m.
5. **Review of decisions and actions – President Peters**
   5.1 Discussion: Overview/summary
   5.2 General input from members

11:45 a.m.
6. **Other business**
   6.1 From the floor
   6.2 Next meeting date/location/agenda items from the floor

12 Noon
7. **Adjournment**

MEETING PLANNING CHECKLIST

- book facility and equipment
- prepare and distribute previous minutes, copies of the agenda and background
- contact people on the agenda
- collect previous minutes and reports
- obtain resource people as necessary

Facility

- size and shape of meeting room(s)
- electrical and microphone outlets
- acoustics
- washrooms
- heat/cold regulator and ventilation
- winter and bad weather access
- parking facility arrangements and accessibility to the disabled
- room set-up arrangements and lighting
- name of custodian and where to be reached
- telephone access
- wall space
- emotional impact (colour, aesthetics)

Equipment and Supplies

- documents of organization (e.g. previous minutes, bylaws, policy and procedures)
- tables (number, shape, size), chairs (number, comfort)
- extension cords
- flip chart
- wastebasket
- coffee, tea, juice, water pitchers, glasses
- other: recorder, microphone, cassettes, video recorder/projector, bulletin board, directional signs, camera/film, name tags, felt pens, masking tape, scratch paper, pencils, display materials

After Meeting

- collect unused materials
- return equipment
- clean up
- send thank you notes
- process the evaluations
- mail minutes and other follow-up items
- check that members have followed up on their responsibilities
- send update to absent members
- plan next meeting

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR – TAKE LEADERSHIP – THINK AHEAD

- ***Plan meetings in relation to objectives***
  Good leadership begins before the meeting, with plans for time, method and resources for accomplishing the stated goals.

- ***Plan meetings in relation to what members expect***
  A well planned agenda is essential, but success depends on the participants having the information in advance, with time to prepare.

- ***Define and clarify goals during the meeting***
  Without clear understanding of the direction the group is taking, problems are likely to develop and members may become bogged down in unrelated discussion. Open with the meeting's purpose.

- ***Appraise progress mid-stream: it's never too late to choose a new direction***
  It is important that everyone understand what's been done and what remains ahead, who is responsible and what the deadlines are. Periodic progress reports are useful.

- ***Use suitable methods of procedure***
  It is important to address the problem from the most realistic approach. Different circumstances lend themselves to different approaches.

- ***Evaluate***
  This does not mean to be critical of the people in your group or yourself. It means to consider the *process* critically to determine its effectiveness or lack of it.

- ***Communicate***
  Make it a habit to use active listening techniques to assure that what you are saying is what you mean, and what is being heard is what is intended.

- ***Determine "decision-readiness"***
  Use caution before calling for a vote. The group may have too little information or feel unsure of its implication. Premature action may also come about if the leader fails to bring out inner, unexpressed concerns of reticent members. Dissatisfaction may follow.

- ***Divide jobs and responsibilities and create new ones as the needs arise***
  A reasonable division of labour will ease the pressure on currently involved members and will offer opportunities to others for involvement and growth. Overburdening burns them out prematurely.

- ***Discuss problems openly***
  Conflicts or anxieties should be acknowledged openly and discussed frankly.

- ***Face tension frankly***
  Often the surface reason for tension may actually camouflage the real reasons; every attempt should be made to air these concerns.

- ***Set a climate of free expression***
  When members feel inhibited, or lack confidence or trust in the group or the leader, the session has less chance of being successful. People are more apt to express themselves honestly in an atmosphere of informality, friendliness and mutual respect.

CHAIR ROLE DURING THE MEETING – TAKE LEADERSHIP – THINK AHEAD

Keep On Topic

- Interrupt the discussion to bring it back to its primary purpose by reminding members of the agreed upon agenda and purpose.
- Make your comment in a way that acknowledges the usefulness of the views being contributed, but suggests that this is not the best forum to express them.
- Be gentle but firm and use eye contact to make a friendly connection to the person you cut off.

Encourage and Equalize Participation

- Create a warm and open atmosphere;
- Respond positively to debate and creative thinking;
- Draw out a range of views, and encourage diversity of opinion;
- Challenge members to think innovatively, to go beyond the usual questions;
- Provide opportunities for all members to contribute;
- View conflict as positive and manage it effectively ;
- Clarify and recap discussion to help move toward consensus; and
- Summarize decisions of the group.

Ask silent members if they have anything to say.

Ask over-participating, dominant members to refrain from speaking at times.

Observe the pace of the meeting – allow for breathing space in the proceedings.

Factors That Affect People's Willingness And Ability To Contribute To Meetings

- The need for recognition: Everyone likes to feel appreciated. Offer congratulations on tasks completed or thanks for a particular contribution. Acknowledge special skills and strengths.

- The need for learning and development: Provide opportunities for development and discussion of new concepts and ideas – encourage people to stretch their expertise.

- The need for social interaction: Some members will perform better if they are given opportunities to get to know their colleagues. Provide time at meetings (or outside meetings) to interact informally if they choose, share personal information with the group.

- The need for accomplishment: Some members will derive satisfaction from completing tasks. Assign them individual responsibilities and recognize their work.

Clarify and Rephrase

At certain times in the discussion, members may not understand each other, or talk past each other. Feelings usually rise as the miscommunication continues. Intervene to help clarify what is being said, essentially acting as an **interpreter**. Paraphrase what one or two

members has said so that everybody understands the point. Always check y our interpretation with the speaker for accuracy.

Example: "If I understand you Eleanor, your point is that, although these programs are necessary, they are inappropriate for our organization and should be delivered by another agency. Is that right?

Summarize and Test For Agreement

A step beyond paraphrasing during which time the Chair summarizes or reformulates the discussion – at a time when discussion is starting to drag, people are repeating points already made, there seems to be confusion, or memb ers are moving in different directions.

- Anticipate at which point this intervention is needed and move quickly before it becomes overdue and the group gets restless.

- Summaries help the group see how close they are to agreement, refocus the discussion and move the pace along – in fact help members realize that they have actually reached agreement in a discussion that seemed complicated and unresolvable.

- Summaries can also identify areas of disagreement which sharpens the focus of group discussion.

- As with paraphrasing, it is important to check the accuracy of the summary with the group.

When testing for agreement be sure to fully state the proposal you are testing.

Conflict Management

- Accept conflict as natural, don't be afraid of it. When it occurs treat it as an opportunity to examine issues involved in -depth and learn about underlying values and assumptions.

- Bring hidden conflicts into the open. If you think there is a conflict hidden under the surface that is disrupting the group bring it out a t an appropriate time.

- Disagree with ideas not people. No matter how tense a conflict becomes, never allow a disagreement over ideas, beliefs, procedures or plans turn into a personal attack.

- When defining the problem, always define it as shared. It is the entire group's problem and the responsibility to resolve the problem is shared.

- When a problem is apparent between two people, get the viewpoints for others and move away from the two antagonists (i.e. "we seem to have a difference of opinion here – are there other points of view?").

- If the two antagonists are unable to move forward try to involve the two parties in finding common ground with each other (i.e. "what do you like about Eleanor's suggestion?").

- Try to reach consensus, but if it isn't po ssible summarize key points of disagreement, check them with the group then move forward. Sometimes it helps to leave contentious issues and come back to them at a later time.

Role Guidelines

Committee Chair	Member

ORIENT YOUR MEMBERS

- Allow time for getting to know one another
- Discuss your purpose and policies
- Explain committee structure and responsibilities (and/or develop)
- Clarify goals and agree upon objectives

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Allow time for unfinished business
- List reports and who is responsible
- Schedule time with flexibility
- Carefully consider the order in which you place business on the agenda

DURING THE MEETING

- Arrive early
- Begin on time (be sure a quorum is present)
- Keep the meeting moving and be sensitive to the needs of the group to be heard
- Keep the discussion on track and clarify frequently (or help facilitator do this)
- Motions should state: what is to be done; at what cost; by whom; a prescribed time limit

Member

- Review the agenda and all available information before the meeting

- Attend all meetings and inform the Chair if you are unable to attend

- Arrive on time for the meeting and remain until the scheduled time for adjournment

- Participate fully in discussions

- Listen with an open mind to the opinions of others, and seek common ground and shared solutions

- Encourage others to participate in the discussions

- Volunteer for tasks where help is requested and where you can make a contribution

- Follow through on any responsibilities assigned at the meeting

- Accept the decision of the group

- Fulfill commitments and follow through meeting targets

BASIC DECISION MAKING STEPS

The decision making style should:

1. **draw on the expertise of all meeting members;**
2. **make clear, well-thought out decisions;**
3. **formally record decisions for future reference, and for legal purposes;**
4. **communicate the decisions to the appropriate parties.**

Recognize and define the problem.

> Everyone must understand the problem. This sometimes takes time to articulate and define. Background preparation is especially helpful.

Examine the problem.

> Most groups make better decisions if they have choices in front of them, rather than being forced to select or reject one idea.

> Ideas and options can be generated be generated beforehand or during the meeting. During the meeting use brainstorming, buzz groups and/or discussion groups.

> Once alternatives have been identified, the implications and consequences of each one need to be considered. For each option ask: *What are the likely consequences? How will this affect members and stakeholders? How will it affect the organization's other program s and services?*

Decision Making Styles

> **Avoiding or abdicating a decision:** failure to reach agreement can lead to the Board or committee passing the problem to the Executive Director.

> **Decision by majority rule:** voting.

> - Following a thorough discussion of the problem and options a formal motion is presented and a vote taken.

> - How the motion is framed shapes the scope of the discussion and can narrow the options and limits the response to "yes" or "no" and may eliminate important alternatives. Members should not propose motions too early in the discussion until all alternatives are reviewed. **Framing the motion is at least as important as the voting.**

> **Consensus building:** this is less formal than voting and allows a decision to encompass the views of all members. It generates a wider range of ideas and options. *The issue is initially framed as a question or problem and discussion centres around finding the best approach to the issue.* In the course of discussion the question may be reframed several times and various options may be developed, altered or combined.

> **Implement decision:** Plans for implementation need to consider resources required and who will do it by when.

> **Evaluate decision:** specifying what worked well and what could be done even better a nother time will improve the capacity of the organization to make quality decisions.

MINUTE TAKING

General Guidelines

- The "secretary" should take careful notes of:
  - What was done not said.
  - Include all motions, including amendments in exact wording wheth er they passed or not and who proposed them. Information needs to be accurate, precise, impartial and specific. Motions which are adopted should be capitalized and appear with an asterisk in the left margin.
  - Not personal opinions, interpretations by the secretary, nor should they include descriptive phrases. Adjectives should be avoided and notes should be factual.
  - Praise or criticism of members should appear only in the form of officially adopted notes of gratitude or commendation.
- Minutes should be typed and distributed within **one week** of the meeting to all those in attendance and any others on supplementary distribution lists.
- Minutes that are mailed in advance need not be read for approval at the following meeting, though corrections should be noted. When indicated in the record that an attachment will be included, it should be sent with the minutes.

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GROUP MINUTES SAMPLE OUTLINE

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Committee Name:

Date of Meeting:

Place:

Chair/Facilitator:

Team Building Exercise:

Members Attending:

What Happened And How (according to agenda):

Decision Action Items:

Future Plans/Next Steps:

With Questions Call:

          Recorder:

RESPONDING TO COMMON MEETING PROBLEMS

Behaviour	Reasons Why	Possible Solutions
Person dominates the discussion, is overly talkative.	• eager beaver • wordy by nature • well-informed • show-off • lonely, needs to feel accepted	• interrupt with…."That's a point, what do other people think? • ask others for different perspectives • interrupt and summarize • interrupt and indicate that comments are not related to discussion • seat the person near you to be responsive to body language • call a straw vote
Person is argumentative, overly aggressive.	• feeling pressured, upset • aggressive personality • argumentative by nature • has not been acknowledged • has been dismissed or ignored in the past	• do not get angry as well • summarize valid points made, then move on • solicit group support by asking if others agree, then move on • talk to person privately, try to develop cooperation • seat the person beside you so that you can more easily control him or her
Person is dictatorial, wants own way, makes decisions without committee.	• may not know how to delegate • believes own way is best • needs power • very controlling nature	• ask for input from other members • talk with person privately • do not establish eye contact • encourage expression of opinion, then move back to the group
Person is a discourager, always responds negatively to new ideas.	• long time member may feel has tried all ways • may be threatened by new people, ideas • may want to cling to power of "tradition"	• encourage person to share why it didn't work • use humour to defuse discouragement • acknowledge past experience • be supportive of the other members' ideas
Two people have an argument.	• each believes other is wrong • strong/directing personalities • can split group	• emphasize points of disagreement • refer to meeting objectives • request input from another member • ask a specific question related to topic • request personal issues be withheld
People having a side conversation.	• may be related to subject, but person has not been recognized to speak • may be personal comment	• direct a question to one of the people involved • intervene and remind that only one person has the floor

Behaviour	Reasons Why	Possible Solutions
	• may be "Doubting Thomas" • may be the perennial "down putter"	• encourage people to use a note pad so as not to lose thoughts • keep a pad to record order of speakers and enforce it • interrupt, restate last remark made by group and ask person's opinion of it
Person who promises to do something and doesn't follow through, often misses meetings.	• procrastinates by nature • unable to set realistic goals • has good ideas, can't put into practice • lack of confidence • may not know how to do task	• be sure person understands what is expected • set guidelines/timelines mutually • offer support • talk promptly, one-to-one about attendance • inform person before meeting that report is due
Person who ramble, talks about irrelevant issues.	• wants attention • loses train of thought	• thank person and summarize what was said • ask person to briefly summarize • interrupt, remind what objective is and move on • smile, comment that point is interesting, but must move on to topic being discussed • refer to time allotted for discussion of issue • appoint an observer to assess participation
Person who is very quiet, does not contribute to the discussion.	• may be shy by nature • may simply not have anything to say • may be there but really "on holiday" • may not be clear about expectations regarding participation	• seat near you, look for cues indicating person might like to comment • check at break to affirm his opinions are sought • if aware of a helpful point made in another context, ask if she/he will share that with the group

AGENDA PLANNING WORKSHEET

Committee/Group: _____

Meeting Date: _____ **Location:** _____

Time: (from-to) _____ **Chair:** _____

Recorder: _____ **Timekeeper** _____

Topic/Item   **Person Responsible and Duration**

_____

Desired Outcomes

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_____**Report Attached** □

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Desired Outcomes

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_____**Report Attached** □

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