



“How to Run a Better Business Meeting”

by
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One of my primary goals, as a District Governor, was to enlighten each Lions Club in our District on various ways to make our Club meetings run more effectively and to be more enjoyable for all of us to attend. I wanted all of us to adopt programs that would make our Club meetings and activities fun, and that would allow us to focus on our primary reason for being Lions – Community Service.

The first step in this process was our “GRINCH” program, which primarily focused on the general atmosphere of our Clubs and all of their members. Please note that the term “GRINCH” has nothing to do with Christmas, it is merely an acronym that is to serve as a reminder of the following general instructions to us all:

Greet everyone & make them feel welcome at all meetings & activities.

Remind everyone of our meetings and activities. (We all forget things.)

Involve everyone in our Club & its activities.

Name tags help all of us remember. (Did I mention that some of us forget?)

Community service is our reason for existing. Keep it in mind at all times.

Have fun! (And that’s an order.)

However, a number of Lions and Lions Clubs have periodically requested that I provide them with more specific instructions for improving their Club meetings. In an effort to summarize all of these ideas in one place (all of which I stole liberally from the various Clubs that I visited during my year as DG), I would like to offer to each of you the following suggestions for running a fun and effective meeting. These instructions are intended not only for Club Presidents, but also for the entire membership of each Club, in order that everyone can better understand the typical expectations of Club officers, Committee Chairs, etc.

Please note that these same basic rules will generally apply whether we are talking about a local Lions Club meeting, a District event, a corporate meeting, or even a session of Congress. These ideas are not necessarily my own; as I have often mentioned, the best ideas in Lions are generally stolen. Therefore, I have “stolen” these ideas from the various clubs that I visited throughout my year as DG.

In an effort to make these ideas and suggestions more memorable, I have titled them:

“The Ten Commandments of Business Meetings”

- I. The moderator (Club President, District Governor, etc.) should have a clear cut (previously prepared) agenda for each meeting. When possible, copies should be provided to all in attendance. A sample format for a typical Lions Club meeting appears below:
 1. Call Meeting to Order (*at the appropriate time*).
 2. Lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 3. Have an Opening Prayer.
 4. Introduce any Guests.
 5. Take Attendance. (*This can be oral or silent. At large events, such as a District Cabinet meeting, this is usually done ahead of time in the form of a registration desk or by using sign-in sheets.*)
 6. Have everyone sing one or two verses of a song.
 7. Have a reading of the previous meeting’s Minutes by the Secretary.
 8. Have a reading of the Financial Report by the Treasurer.
 9. Individual Committee Reports:
 - a. Community Service Projects
 - b. Fund Raising Projects
 - c. Etc.
 10. Old Business:
 - a. Items tabled from a previous meeting (if any)
 11. New Business:
 - a. Items raised from the floor - e.g.:
 - 1) New project ideas
 - 2) New Funding Requests
 - 3) New Service Requests
 - 4) Etc.
 12. Presentations:
 - a. Break Out Sessions (when appropriate)
 - b. Special Project Presentations
 - c. Guest Speaker (e.g., District Project Chair, ZC, or DG)
 13. Tail Twister Time:
 - a. Keep it light.
 - b. Keep it funny.
 - c. Keep it fun.
 - d. Keep it short.
 - e. Include some fun facts about Lions.
 - f. Have your 50-50 drawing, if one is done.
 - g. Collect your fines and sit down...
 14. Announcements - e.g.:
 - a. Upcoming Cabinet Meetings
 - b. Upcoming Zone Meetings

- c. Upcoming Training opportunities
- d. Upcoming projects that need workers
- e. Etc.

15. Closing Comments for the Good of the Organization – e.g.:

- a. Illnesses & Deaths
- b. Births & Birthdays
- c. Thank you notes
- d. Etc.

16. Close the Meeting (*on time*).

- II. Oral reports should always be BRIEF. Typically, an oral report should be a maximum of 2 – 3 minutes in length, unless otherwise directed by your moderator. If anyone feels they need more time to give an oral report, they must first request (and receive) permission for the specific amount of additional time that they feel they need from the meeting’s moderator. If the moderator is unable to grant you extra time, stay within your allotted time frame.

If someone uses more than their fair share of time in giving an oral report, they are “stealing” time from some other part of the business meeting. This is both rude and boring. (“Thou shalt not steal time from thy fellow Lions!”)

- III. Oral reports should be informative and interesting and should be given with both, enthusiasm and excitement.
- IV. Oral reports should only highlight the key points that appear in your accompanying written reports. (NOTE: Do not read your written report verbatim when giving an oral report!) - See Rule #II.
- V. Do not confuse an oral report with a presentation. Presentations are intended to be more comprehensive and therefore require more time.
- VI. All presentations should be interesting, amusing, and informative. They also need to stay within their time limitations, as specified by the meeting’s moderator. Use handouts and visual aids as needed. Make your presentations worthwhile.
- VII. Written reports should be more inclusive than an oral one, and can be as detailed as necessary. Unless specified otherwise, a written report can actually be as long as necessary. However, please note that the longer the report, the less likely that it will be read in its entirety by its intended audience.
- VIII. Written Reports should be neat, legible, and well written. They should also be free of spelling and grammatical errors. It is preferable that all written reports be typed. With today’s readily available technology, there is really no reason to turn in a handwritten one.

IX. Copies of written reports should always be prepared and distributed to all necessary recipients to support an oral report – unless directed otherwise by the meeting’s moderator. (Note: In many instances, a written report may be required, even when an oral report is not requested.)

X. HAVE FUN!

I hope that these general guidelines (my “Ten Commandments of Business Meetings”) will help all of us to have better, more interesting, exciting, and fun meetings. Please feel free to adopt these guidelines immediately.

Also, as a separate note to all meeting moderators:

1. Be sure to contact everyone who has a report or a presentation to give, prior to the meeting, to make sure that they understand your expectations of them.
2. Be sure to give them enough notice so that they will have time to prepare reports and presentation materials as well as produce the required number of copies that they will need to bring.
3. Be sure to limit the number of oral reports to be given in order to keep your overall meeting length within acceptable guidelines.