

How to Conduct a Successful Meeting

By Donna Cheswick- Norwin Chapter Leadership Training – July 12, 2011

1. PREPARATION

Every meeting needs an agenda. This will let everyone know what information will be covered and keeps the meeting on track and focused.

The agenda should include the following:

- Priorities = what topics/discussion must be covered
- Sequence = in what order will topics be covered
- Timing = how much time will be spent on each topic

Send out the agenda ahead of time so that everyone knows what to expect.

You might want to have an agenda policy so if someone has a topic they want discussed at the next upcoming meeting they submit the item ahead of time so it can be worked into the agenda.

2. CONDUCT

Set ground rules (silence cell phones, no checking email, everyone has the right to express their opinion without being interrupted, etc.).

Use time wisely. Start and end the meeting on time. Have a monitor pay attention to time.

Conducting a meeting does not mean letting everyone say whatever they want, whenever they want to. A well conducted meeting stays on topic, with one speaker and one idea at a time. This does not mean everyone agrees. Everyone who has something to say should get a turn to speak, and all points should be considered. But not all points are equally valid and many times people will wander from the purpose and outcome of the meeting. Control the meeting by encouraging discussion and active listening, but keep focus on the topics on the agenda. A weak chairperson will allow the discussion to wander frequently and that wastes everyone's time.

Use your agenda as your time guide. If you notice that time is running out for a particular item you have to decide what to do. Options include:

- Consider hurrying the discussion
- Pushing to make a decision
- Deferring discussion until another time
- Assigning the discussion to a subcommittee who will meet separately and then report back to the group.

Ensure that everyone contributes. Make a point of drawing in quieter members into the discussion.

Encourage open discussion.



Donna Cheswick has been a member of the Norwin WBN Chapter since 2003 and has served as the WBN Publicity Director since 2005. She works as a Financial Advisor and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst for Medallion Wealth Management, Inc. For 25 years Donna has been working with individual and institutional clients offering a wide range of financial products and planning services with specific investment focus in fixed income investments, retirement planning and specialized divorce financial analysis. She strives to develop investment strategies custom-tailored to her clients' individual circumstances, risk tolerance and financial goals. She writes articles and provides ideas covering a wide range of topics related to finance and divorce that have been featured in local and national print and online publications and radio. In addition she is also a speaker and teaches workshops on a wide variety of topics.

Donna M. Cheswick

Financial Advisor and Shareholder
Certified Divorce Financial Analyst

Medallion Wealth Management, Inc. | 2605 Nicholson Road, Building 2, Suite 103 | Sewickley, PA 15143 | 855-934-8600 |
P: 724-934-8600 | F: 724-934-8601 | www.medallion-wealth.com

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