

# Leadership:

## *President of an Organization*

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Members of your organization showed their respect for you when they elected you president of your club. They knew that much of the organization's success depends on a capable, well-organized president, and they trusted you with this important job. This publication should help you live up to that trust. It will help you with each of your responsibilities as president—planning and conducting club meetings, building club membership, and increasing club outreach.

### **Plan and Conduct Club Meetings**

Planning and conducting club meetings are two of the most important presidential tasks. Of course, club officers and members are always on hand to help, but it is up to the president to see that things are done. Several steps are involved in successful planning and conducting club meetings.

### **Confer with Other Club Officers**

Confer with your officers before the meeting to ensure smooth meetings. Be sure you consult with the vice president, secretary, and treasurer about the order of business.

Check with the program chair before the meeting to be sure program time has been arranged. Sometimes it is better to have the program before the business if a guest speaker is involved.

Alert committee chairs if you plan to ask them for reports at the meeting. Some presidents ask each chair to give a progress report at each meeting.

After consulting with the officers, make an agenda listing what must be done at the meeting. It is a good idea to note the

amount of time you think each item on the agenda will take. You can use this estimated time schedule as a guide to help keep the meeting on track as you preside.

### **Learn the Club's Bylaws**

It is your job to see that the club follows its bylaws. Read and be familiar with the club's bylaws and keep them on hand during the meetings for reference. If you are aware of the items outlined in the bylaws, you can help your club members become aware of the bylaws, too. If your club has not developed bylaws, now is a good time to appoint a bylaws committee to formulate a set.

### **Make Committee Appointments**

An important duty of the president is to appoint committees as needed by the organization. Sometimes only chairs are appointed and then are given the privilege of selecting members to the committee. However members are selected, committees work better if talents, background, and interests in the specific committee's tasks are kept in mind as they are appointed. Appoint committees only if they have a job to do. Three to five people should be appointed to each working committee.

### **Preside at Club Meetings**

It is your job to preside at most club meetings — to call the meeting to order on time, announce the order of business, and present business not introduced by members.

As you preside, it is important to encourage discussion and give members a chance to participate in club decisions. The more ideas brought into the discussion, the better the decision is likely to be.



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However, discussions can get out of hand. As president you direct discussions in an orderly way. These tips may help you:

- Give every member a chance to speak.
- Encourage all viewpoints, giving “for” and “against” speakers equal opportunity to talk.
- Make sure members speak one at a time. You may have to restrict speakers to the subject and to rules of order.
- Avoid giving your opinion. Because you are the president, your opinion could sway the group decision.
- When there has been enough discussion, ask for a motion and put the motion to a vote. When the vote has been carefully counted, announce the results.
- Some groups avoid important discussion — or cut discussion short — because members tend to lose interest if the discussion drags. This does not have to happen in your organization. You can help keep the group’s attention.
- Give every member a chance to participate in club activities. By using members’ talents and interests, you can involve everyone in the organization. As president, you should encourage others to work rather than doing all the work yourself.
- Keep the meeting moving. Watch how members react to discussion. Call for a vote after sufficient discussion but before discussion begins to drag.

- Use the gavel — or any other device — to call the group to order.

## Share Leadership Tasks

Living up to the trust your members placed in you is not always easy but is rewarding and worthwhile — for you and your club members.

Your tenure as president is even more worthwhile for the members if you let the members know how much you need their help. If you convince members the club needs everyone’s talents, you help build leadership. By sharing your leadership tasks, you help others become capable of taking over your job when your term is complete.

## Suggestions

- Have the vice president occasionally preside over the program part of the meeting.
- Inform committee chairs when you will call for their reports.
- Give all members an opportunity to participate in programs and activities.
- Have special projects and activities planned by committees and reported to the club by committee chairs.
- Know and follow parliamentary procedures, but be courteous in conducting the meeting.



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