

Promoting teamwork

Promoting teamwork is more than following Robert's Rules of Order. Ask yourself:

- ✓ Is the board able to have a significant conversation on important issues?
- ✓ Can the board work toward consensus through patient, respectful, productive discussion?
- ✓ Is there good teamwork?

What does effective teamwork look like to you?

Members of a team...

- Are consulted for their opinion or involvement before decisions or plans are made
- Commit time to developing a consensus in which everyone is involved
- Voluntarily offer their experience and knowledge to colleagues
- Regularly acknowledge and celebrate efforts and contributions
- Are non-defensive and receptive to new ideas, opinions and needs of others
- Consider the impact of their plans on others
- Avoid gossiping and talk directly to each other when there are problems or conflicts
- Come prepared for meetings

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Next Steps

The following is a list of activities that you can do at your next board meeting:

Activity: Procedures

As a board discuss how you organize and operate your meetings. Discuss:

- When to use formal rules of order
- Review the rules of order
- Creating your own ground rules
- How to maintain discussion focus
- When to work toward consensus
- How to develop and promote teamwork
- Developing communication and conflict resolution protocols
- How to develop good minutes with right amount of detail

Activity: Web of Life

Web of life: Ask each participant to create a web of life for your organization. Include:

- Original purpose
- People for whom it exists
- Present condition (how does it differ from 10 years ago, what changes externally, internal adjustments made)
- Perceived relevance to the people it serves

Discussion: What does understanding the context have to do with holding effective meetings?

Activity:

Presentation and discussion on decision-making: Present the different options for making decisions. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of the following options:

- Consensus
- Voting
- Subgroup
- One person

Implementation: What type of decision-making would work best for your organization? Why?

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References

Online

Community Foundations of PEI
<http://www.cfpei.ca/index.php>

Community Learning Network Innovative Leaders in Lifelong Learning (Alberta)
<http://www.communitylearning.info/>

Community Sector Council (Newfoundland and Labrador)
<http://communitysector.nl.ca/>

Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program
<http://collegeofcontinuinged.dal.ca/Continuing%20Management%20Education/Non-Profit%20Sector%20Leadership/Resources.php>

Charity Village
<http://charityvillage.com/cv/research/rbod.html>

Volunteer Canada
<http://volunteer.ca/home>

The Muttart Foundation http://www.muttart.org/board_development_workbooks

Consent Agenda
<http://www.boardsource.org/Knowledge.asp?ID=3.70>

Books

Governing Boards, Cyril O. Houle, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

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Appendix A: Sample Agenda

Consent Agenda

A *consent agenda* can turn a board meeting into a meeting of the minds around the things that matter most. A consent agenda is a bundle of items that is voted on, without discussion, as a package. It differentiates between routine matters not needing explanation and more complex issues needing examination. While not difficult to use, a consent agenda requires discipline in working through the following seven steps:

1. Set the meeting agenda
2. Distribute materials in advance
3. Read materials in advance
4. Introduce the consent agenda at the meeting
5. Remove (if requested) an item from and accept the consent agenda
6. Approve the consent agenda
7. Document acceptance of the consent agenda

Sample Agenda: Board of Directors Meeting

ABC Organization Monday, January 2, 20XX

1234 Main Street, Suite 56 City, PR 78910

9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Board Meeting
9:45 – 9:50	Welcome and Chair's Remarks
9:50 – 10:00	Consent Agenda
	Minutes of the December 1, 200X Meeting
	President's Report
	Planning and Development Task Force Update
10:00 – 2:15	Strategic Discussions: Presentations and Feedback
10:00 – 11:45	Strategic Plan: Measures of Success
	[Noon — Buffet Lunch]
12:30 – 2:15	New Markets Strategy: Implementation Plan
2:15 – 2:45	Governance Committee: Discussion Items
	○ Bylaws
	○ Board Member Recruitment
2:45 – 3:00	Closing

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Appendix B: Discussion Techniques

Brainstorming

The objective of brainstorming is to gather large quantities of creative ideas as quickly as possible. The generation of creative ideas requires a particular environment: one that is non-linear, non-judgmental and quick-paced. Brainstorming meets these requirements by encouraging participants to suggest many ideas without limiting them with considerations of reasonableness, accuracy, practicality or cost. To encourage participation from the entire group, it is imperative that there be no initial judgment on or discussion of any of the ideas that are generated.

General Rules for Brainstorming

- Set the objective clearly. It is important that the participants are focused on the same objective.
- Decide on your limits. The limits can be on the duration of the brainstorming session, the number of ideas you want to collect or to stop at the first (or second or third) natural lull in the flow of ideas.
- Generate excitement and enthusiasm. People can only be creative when they are in a positive frame of mind.
- Encourage creativity. Anything goes!
- Do not allow participants to comment, discuss or judge any of the points raised.
- Keep the pace moving. This fosters the feeling of excitement and enthusiasm. You may have to be very encouraging initially and you may have to use many filler words such as: "Give me more." "Who has some other ideas?" "Say whatever you are thinking right now".
- Go for quantity. The greater the number of ideas recorded the better.
- Follow your brainstorming with a listing or prioritization exercise to capture the jewels that have come out as a result of this exercise.

Pros & Cons

Got several ideas and can't decide which one to go for? Simply list the benefits and drawbacks of each idea and compare the results. This can be done as a full group, or by asking pairs, or small groups to work on the pros and cons of one option and report back to the group.

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Multi-Voting or Dotmocracy

This is a very simple and quick method for teams to use in setting priorities when there are many options – Which are most important? What do we need to do this year? Which project should be started first? What core values are most important?

Steps:

1. Create a list of possibilities
2. Give each person in the group 10 self-stick dots. (For this exercise, color is irrelevant.) Instruct them that to choose their priorities, they are to use “all 10 dots but no more than 4 on any ONE item.” Therefore, 4 dots would indicate their top priority. Some items will have no dots. Participants actually walk up to the flip charts and place their dots next to their items of choice. (If you have a larger group, split the items on 2 flip charts on opposite sides of the room so as not to take too much time or cause congestion. Start half the group on each side.)
3. When everyone has placed his/her dots, count them for each item and make a priority listing on a new flip chart page. There usually are a few clear winners. You may then discuss with the group if they agree those should be top priorities on which to start working. It does not necessarily mean that the others are eliminated.

If the list is still too long, give each person in the group 2 or 3 self-stick dots and ask them to vote for their top priorities from the existing priority list (one vote per item).

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Appendix C: Robert's Rules of Order

Motions

To propose a motion:

- A member addresses the Chair.
- The Chair recognizes the speaker.
- The speaker says, "I move that..." and delivers or reads the motion.
- Another member raises a hand to be identified by the Chair and secretary and says, "I second the motion," ensuring the motion has the support of more than one member.
- The Chair says, "It has been moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that _____. Is there any discussion?"
- The mover usually speaks first. Then an opportunity to speak must be given to anyone wishing to support or oppose the motion.
- At the end of the discussion, the Chair says, "If there is no further discussion (pause), the motion is that _____. All in favour?" The Chair pauses while a count is taken. "Opposed?" Again, a pause, and then, "The motion is carried (or defeated/lost)."

Explanation of Motions

Type of Motion	Purpose of Motion	Requires Secunder	Requires Discussion	Can be Amended	Vote Required
To table	To clear floor for more urgent business/ set aside	Yes	No	No	Majority
To amend	To improve motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To refer to	To allow more careful committee consideration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To limit or extend discussion to certain time	To provide more or less time for discussion	Yes	No	No	2/3
To call for	To end discussion	Yes	No	No	2/3

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Type of Motion	Purpose of Motion	Requires Secunder	Requires Discussion	Can be Amended	Vote Required
the vote	immediately and vote				
To raise a question or privilege	To bring up an urgent matter due to undesirable conditions	No	No	No	Majority
To recess	To secure a rest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To adjourn	To end the meeting	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
To rise to a point of order	To enforce rules or call attention to rule violation	No	No	No	Majority
To appeal ruling made by Chair	To determine attitude of assembly on ruling made by Chair	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
To suspend rules temporarily	To allow special action not possible within the rules	Yes	No	No	2/3
To withdraw motion	To prevent vote or inclusion in minutes	No	No	No	Majority
To object to consideration of a motion	To prevent wasting time on an unimportant decision	No	No	No	2/3
To rescind	To repeal motion discussion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To ratify	To approve previous action taken	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3

Source: <http://www.boarddevelopment.org>

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Appendix D: Consensus

What is it?

- Consensus is a process for making group decisions without voting.
- Agreement is reached through a process of gathering information and viewpoints, discussion, persuasion, synthesizing proposals and/or developing new ones.

The goal of the consensus process is to reach a decision, which everyone can agree on or live with.

Things to remember

- Blocking consensus: Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity. A group can proceed without having total agreement.
- If someone cannot agree with a given proposal, they may be asked to “stand aside” so the group can move forward. These disagreements can be noted in the minutes.
- If they refuse, then action is blocked until a substitute agreement can be found.
- The decision could be postponed until a later time.

The benefits

- It produces more intelligent decisions by incorporating the best thinking of everyone.
- It keeps people from taking positions or adversary attitudes.
- It increases likelihood of new or better ideas.
- Everyone has a stake in implementing the decision because all have participated in its creation.
- Lessens the possibility that a minority will feel the decision is imposed.

When seeking consensus

- Encourage presentation of viewpoints.
- Listen carefully for agreements or hesitations.
- Test for agreement as soon as the decision is emerging. State the tentative agreement in question form, e.g. “Do we all agree that we’ll meet on Tuesday evenings for the next two months?”
- When there is not agreement: explore the disagreement, ask for alternatives, and take time.

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Appendix E: Example of Minutes Form

Boards assign responsibility for taking minutes in various ways. Options include:

- A staff person (e.g. administrative assistant) prepares draft minutes which are checked by the board Secretary;
- The Board has a Recording Secretary;
- Responsibility rotates among board members.

Name of Organization:			
Purpose of Meeting:			
Date/Time:			
Chair:			
Topic	Discussion	Action	Person Responsible
1.			
2.			
3.			

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