

High Performance Committee Meetings

One of the most challenging factors for Committees to overcome is the fact that each person on a committee has their own beliefs values and opinions. For this reason many committees can experience conflict (an emotional response experienced by a person when values are challenged). It is not the element of conflict that will threaten the future of the committee but rather the way it is handled will be a determining factor.

The following list of criteria and requirements are designed to prevent many such conflicts and are designed to maximise the effectiveness of committee meetings.

A committee, in every sense of the word is a TEAM and as such requires all members to be aligned on how, what and why it exists. For a committee to engage maximum effectiveness ALL MEMBERS are expected to understand the rules of engagement. Accountability and responsibility resides equally with all members – not just the President.

When the system of accountability and responsibility is in compromised the beginning of the demise of the entire team is at risk. When one member defaults and accountability is not immediately forthcoming the Rules become meaningless and worthless. Such instances are shared equally. If the team fails to deliver it is because all members failed to apply the rules.

1. **All** decisions are made by consensus
If a member fails to accept the consensus vote they must be questioned on their ability to remain objective and support the vote.
2. **All** team members agree to publicly uphold the decision of the whole
Once a decision is reached every member of the committee must support the decision publicly there is to be no saying “it wasn’t my idea”
3. **All** team members are required to take a stand – no abstaining is allowed
When a topic (contentious or otherwise) is on the table all members must take a position
4. **All** positions are facts based – no suppositions or emotional biases are entertained
Logical thought patterns are difficult to maintain on emotional issues – every effort must be made to remain fact based as opposed to emotionally based.
5. **All** discussions are rendered in the First person “I”
When a person has an idea or issue to be tabled it should be done in the first person and not put up as a group matter – the committee will decide where it goes once tabled.
6. **All** discussions and decisions are driven by membership construction – not destruction
If an idea is put forward and members disagree they should be challenged to put forward an alternate idea or help to shape the idea on the table. Destroying an idea publicly will serve as a road block to future ideas.
7. **All** ideas rendered are driven by construction and expansion
Refer to above point
8. **All** team members refrain from injecting historical thinking into decision making
Just because something didn’t work in the past doesn’t mean that it won’t work in the future – all ideas and suggestions are to be treated on merit – not past performance.
9. **All** ideas are rendered for discussion once – the use of obstructionist tactics is not allowed
If an idea is put forward for discussion but generally not considered by the majority it is shelved or moved to another date for discussion – once this happens it is not to be used as a point of obstruction going forward.
10. **All** team members undertake to develop ideas constructively – no time or tolerance is extended to those that want to destruct an idea.
Time is a scarce resource, particularly for those that give their time freely to committee type activities hence all ideas must be developed constructively
11. **All** members must agree to revisit an idea when requested by another.
All ideas that are to be considered by the committee should be advised and listed as an agenda item. Surprise agenda items can add hours (sometimes needlessly) to committee meetings
12. **All** absent members are required to submit positions on agenda items due for decision
Absent members should advise their position on any items to be discussed and decided at a meeting that they are likely to miss. Decisions should not be postponed due to the absence of a few members.