

FUNDAMENTALS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

(Presiding officers to make special note)

- Good preparation.
- Knowledge of parliamentary procedure
- Your ability to deal with disharmonious behavior
- Your ability to assert yourself when necessary

Let's take these fundamentals one at a time:

A. GOOD PREPARATION

Early and thorough preparation greatly reduces the chances of unpleasant surprises and greatly increases the chances for a smooth flowing meeting. Many past presidents offer the following advice:

Prepare a detailed agenda that tells you what everybody is supposed to do and when. Discuss your agenda with your secretary before the meeting begins.

Anticipate any possible controversy. Envision how you will handle it.

If a board meeting, give copies of the agenda to everyone.

B. KNOWLEDGE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

All meetings should have an agreed-upon procedure for conducting the business portion. You will want to know the bye laws of your club and use some recognized system of parliamentary procedure (e.g. Robert's Rules of Order). Without ground rules any Lions meeting can quite easily become disorganized and unmanageable, no matter how skillful the president.

Parliamentary procedure does two very important things for the president. It makes the meeting fair for every one and keeps the meeting moving. The latter is always keenly appreciated by everyone.

C. YOUR ABILITY TO DEAL WITH DISHARMONIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes your leadership will be tested at a meeting by unruly Lions or Lions questioning your authority. Each situation will be different, so there is no one method for dealing with unruly conduct that can be applied to all situations. Here are some recommendations, however, that many Lion leaders have made through the years.

- It is necessary to discipline unruly members, sometimes the other Lions will do this better than you can. Your members are as interested in maintaining discipline and order as you are.
- Some members, as soon as they get the floor, start a discussion instead of making their point. Be ready with this question: "Do you wish to state that in the form of a motion?" This should eliminate unnecessary talk.
- If you have some doubts about properly responding to the various comments made to you while you are conducting the meetings, remember that your fellow Lions will have one of the following motives for addressing you:
 - (a) They want some action or advice
 - (b) They want to build fellowship.
 - (c) They want to express an emotion.
 - (d) They want to inform or share some information.
- Know the name of each member.
- According to the accepted parliamentary procedure, know when and how you can rule a member "out of order": call for a vote; table a matter or refer it to a committee.
- Keep an eye on body language that tells you a Lion is becoming impatient, anxious to speak, confused or irritated.

D. YOUR ABILITY TO ASSERT YOURSELF WHEN NECESSARY

Asserting one's self with fellow Lions is uncomfortable for many Presidents. Try to remember that your fellow Lions really want you to lead them. Also understand that your assertion of leadership is necessary for the good of the entire club. Helpful guidelines are :

- If you're using parliamentary procedure, remember that no one can supersede you. You determine when to bring a motion to vote; and you state whether a motion has passed or has passed or has been defeated.
- Use your gavel to keep order and to keep things moving.
- Keep speakers on the subject when their comments wander off the subject.
- Adjust your agenda if you believe the meetings has to be slowed down or speeded up to accomplish the objectives.
- Tactfully interrupt by making an appropriate suggestion when a speaker is taking too much time. Everyone will appreciate it.
- To reinforce a point - either yours or someone else's - ask the secretary to read back a motion from the minutes. Don't rely on your memory.
- Summarize arguments from both sides when necessary. Then tell the audience what their options are in dealing with the matter, e.g. voting, amending, postponing.
- Settle disputes before they become destructive to the meeting. It is all right to be brusque with a couple of members who are disrupting the meeting.

Assert yourself even more to make sure your member are not split into "losers" and "winners" of any conflict.

After a heated discussion, give credit where due and try to soothe any bruised feelings.

After an issue has been decided, confirm which Lion is going to do what and ask what his or her approach will be ! Read this information into the minutes.

Handle business by general consent when fair and acceptable.

Consider holding one or more board meetings in your home. This tends to give your leadership a psychological edge.