TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

HOW TO CONDUCT
PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Workbook

Success
LEADERSHIP
Series

Success **Leadership** Series

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HOW TO CONDUCT **PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS**

Workbook

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO CONDUCT PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Meetings are a vital communication tool. They produce understanding, eliminate confusion, generate ideas, stimulate action, clarify goals and objectives, define roles and responsibilities, solve problems, and disseminate information. In many of today's organizations, decisions are made in meetings, not by individuals.

This is your workbook for helping you to lead effective meetings. It contains exercises and information that correspond to the lesson and activities to be presented by your session coordinator. This booklet is yours to keep, so use it for your own personal benefit.

As you listen to the session coordinator, make notes in this booklet about what you hear. Jot down any key points, important concepts, and useful ideas you discover. Make a conscious effort to remember them and make them a part of your everyday life.

When your session leader asks you to do so, do the exercises in the booklet.

EXERCISE 1

(A) The membership of your Toastmasters club has declined in the past year, dropping from 28 members to 15. Only 10 of these members attend meetings regularly. Meeting quality has suffered. The club's president decides to hold a meeting with the rest of the executive committee. An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be:

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(B) Your company has revised its Employee Policy Handbook, especially the areas concerning vacation time, sick leave, and absenteeism policies. The Human Resources Department decides to hold a meeting for all employees about the revisions. An effectively worded purpose for that meeting might be:

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MEETING PLANNING WORKSHEET

Purpose (Why is a meeting being held? What results do you expect?)

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Time (How long will the meeting be? What is the best day/time to hold it?)

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Participants (Who should attend?)

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Location (Where should the meeting be held?)

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Special arrangements (What audiovisual equipment is needed? Will refreshments or meals be served?)

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Agenda (What topics should be addressed? How much time should be allotted for each?)

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Assignments (Who will be making presentations? Who will give reports? Will you need a secretary to take notes?)

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MEETING OPENING CHECKLIST

_____ 1. Establish a friendly atmosphere.

_____ 2. Start on time.

_____ 3. Bring everyone up to date.

_____ 4. Open with an attention-getter.

_____ 5. Introduce the situation or problem.

_____ 6. State the purpose of the meeting.

_____ 7. Welcome the group.

_____ 8. Establish a method for discussion.

DISCUSSION TIPS

Following are some ideas for leading, stimulating, guiding, and controlling group discussion:

▸ Get everyone participating
  - State your need for ideas
  - Invite cooperation
  - Seek the unique resources of participants
  - Call on someone
  - Compliment someone

▸ Promote an open atmosphere

▸ Summarize

▸ Use transitions

▸ Ask questions
  - To guide the course of discussion
  - To clarify thinking
  - To reach agreements
  - To involve quiet participants
  - To obtain information
  - To limit or end discussion

▸ Test possible solutions

▸ Keep the discussion on track

▸ Work for consensus

▸ Plan future action

END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

1. Indicate time to conclude.
2. Review the problem briefly.
3. Summarize the progress made.
4. Emphasize agreements.
5. Inform of developments.
6. Thank the group.

EXERCISE 2

You and the others in your group are to hold a meeting to discuss one of the topics below, or one that will be given to you by the coordinator. One will be assigned to serve as meeting leader; the others will be meeting participants. The meeting leader will lead the meeting using the procedures and techniques discussed today. The group is to formulate a solution or recommendation about the topic in 10 minutes. Each of you will then complete the meeting evaluation form on the following page. Then one of the group will be asked to give a one-minute report on the group's meeting.

Topics

a. How can we attract new members for our Toastmasters club?
b. What can be done to improve our Toastmasters club?
c. If our Toastmasters club had the opportunity to send one member to appear on a television talk show, what criteria should be used to select that representative?
d. What can we do to increase our children's reading skills?
e. What can we do to reduce graffiti in our community?
f. What new laws should be established concerning violent crime?

MEETING EVALUATION FOR EXERCISE 2

Circle the number that best describes how well the leader performed.

The leader made participants feel welcome and comfortable.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader clearly explained the problem or situation to be discussed.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader selected a discussion method and explained it to participants.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader was able to effectively initiate discussion.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader appeared confident and poised.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader encouraged everyone to participate.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader used body movements and facial expressions that indicated receptivity.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader frequently summarized the discussion to keep it organized.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader asked questions to guide the discussion.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader asked questions to clarify someone's comments or suggestions.

1	2	3	4	5
LOW				HIGH

The leader tried to involve quiet participants.

1	2	3	4	5

LOW   HIGH

The leader kept the discussion on track.

1	2	3	4	5

LOW   HIGH

The leader worked for consensus on decisions.

1	2	3	4	5

LOW   HIGH

The leader was tactful.

1	2	3	4	5

LOW   HIGH

The leader was able to guide the group to a conclusion or solution.

1	2	3	4	5

LOW   HIGH

The leader closed the meeting using the six-step method.

1	2	3	4	5

LOW   HIGH

Comments or suggestions:

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MEETING EVALUATION

Following is an evaluation form you can use to obtain feedback on meetings you conduct.

1. Objectives of the meeting were:

1	2	3	4	5

UNCLEAR   CLEAR

2. Time utilization was:

1	2	3	4	5

INEFFECTIVE   EFFECTIVE

3. Exchange of views was:

1	2	3	4	5

NOT OPEN   OPEN

4. All participants had a chance to express opinions.

1	2	3	4	5

NO   YES

5. The discussion:

1	2	3	4	5

DIGRESSED   STAYED ON TRACK

6. Final decisions were:

1	2	3	4	5

UNCLEAR   CLEAR

7. The meeting leader was:

1	2	3	4	5

INEFFECTIVE   EFFECTIVE

8. The meeting environment was:

1	2	3	4	5

UNFRIENDLY   FRIENDLY

Comments or suggestions:

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