



LEADERSHIP TIPS

MEETING MANAGEMENT

Do you find that your chapter meetings tend to last far longer than your chapter members' attention spans? Do your conversations wander? Do you ever leave chapter meetings frustrated that items you felt were important were overshadowed by trivial details? We've all been there – the meeting that seems like it just won't end. If so, this is a great time to start fresh and try a new approach. Careful preparation is key to ensuring the meetings run smoothly and you accomplish your top agenda items.

As you prepare, keep these tips in mind:

- For larger chapters, meet with your executive council/officers 24 hours prior to your chapter meeting. Ask executive council members to bring items of new business to that meeting. This is the meeting which will shape the overall chapter meeting. This gives the leadership team the opportunity to troubleshoot before meeting with the entire group.
- Ask committee chairmen to provide detailed reports and announcements for the executive council to review at their meeting. The council can help the chairmen make sure they are including all necessary details in their announcements, and avoid time consuming questions during the chapter meeting.
- Executive council meetings are a great opportunity to invite a chairman to present event details to the chapter officers such as new ideas, potential problems, logistics, budget and resources.
- Prepare a chapter meeting agenda, whether it is a formal or informal meeting. Formal meeting agendas should include officer reports, items of old and new business, and any other important chapter announcements. Agendas should be provided to all chapter members prior to or at the meeting. This structure will help the secretary to organize the meeting minutes.
- Ask the secretary to produce an announcement sheet on Google docs (or another shared platform) and share with everyone. Members will have the latest news and all members, not just committee chairs and officers, can share information. This frees up time at the meeting for discussion versus announcements.
- Use the time immediately after chapter elections as an opportunity to review parliamentary procedure with all members. Presidents that effectively follow Robert's Rules of Order run smoother meetings and allow for chapter members to contribute to discussion in a constructive and orderly manner.

In the end, good meeting management involves getting and keeping executive council leaders organized, thinking in advance how to save time (and thus keeping members' attentions during the meeting), planning ways to avoid rambling and tangential conversations, and using parliamentary procedure for consistency and fairness. Use these tips and your members will say, "We've got to start meeting like this!"