

If you apply these guidelines, you will begin to have a very productive group, and productive groups will accomplish many wonderful things in the community. Communities around the country and world are looking for leaders like you: leaders that encourage its members to contribute his or her ideas and inspire them to action.

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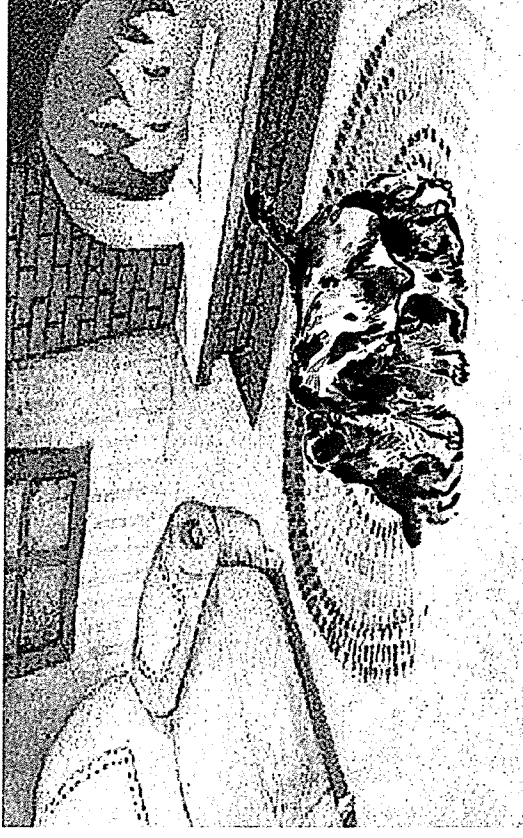
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Person to Person.....

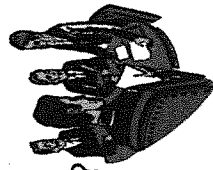
Guidelines for Developing a Dynamic Group

IMAGINE you are the new leader of the local, "We Won't Say No" club. What would you do as a leader in order to encourage progress in your community? Because progress depends on action, not mere intention, you will want to create meetings that produce actions. A leader and its members benefit most when there is a balance between accomplishing tasks and building relationships. Both are necessary for a productive group. In addition, an effective group must communicate well in order to prevent ill-feelings and make clear plans that members are willing to commit to. In other words,

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the members will be committed to *acting* upon the plans of the meeting. *Action* can lead to progress.



Who would you invite to join your great team? And what would you do in order to develop an effective group?

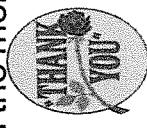
Whoever you invite to join your club, you'll want members who:

- Appreciate one another and their roles in the group
- Understand the importance of having different opinions
- Encourage everyone to participate and share ideas/information

You, of course, will want to be a good leader who:

- Are prepared with an agenda
- Plan effective discussion strategies
- Have "meeting memory" notes recorded - not just secretarial notes

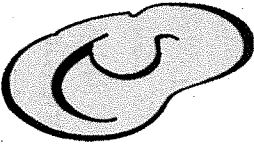
Teach the members to respect one another and listen well



Appreciate one another

Every person is unique. Personalities, skills, backgrounds, and needs are all different. This array of resources is great for a group. Unfortunately, it can also be a challenge. If personalities greatly differ, tension may result. No group needs ill feelings brewing among the members. It is essential for leaders to understand the varying and necessary roles members can play. Members that understand these important roles are more likely to create a group that benefits from the contribution of everyone. It is important to note, too, that members can "play" various roles. We all need to be realistic, think creatively, be able to keep the group focused, and offer encouragement.

book did you enjoy the most? Who has been a great example to you?



Building Listening Skills

1. Challenge the members to complete a chart for each issue:

| Name | Their | Why | How it relates |
|------|---------|-----|----------------|
| | opinion | | to me |
| | | | |

2. Invite *members* to write down the ideas presented during a "brainstorm" instead of using a flip chart for everyone to see. Members rate the ideas, and then the top 5 are put on the flip chart for discussion.

3. Have members make a drawing: make a circle in the center with his/her own name. Place circles all around it with names of group members, one name per circle. Throughout the meeting, draw a line to each person each time she or he makes a statement that you strongly agree with. Set a goal to make five lines to each person.

4. Distribute slips of paper with the varying roles that members could play. Ask the members to take on that role during the first half hour of the meeting. Each member is then to guess who is playing what role. This activity also makes members aware of all the necessary roles for a good group.

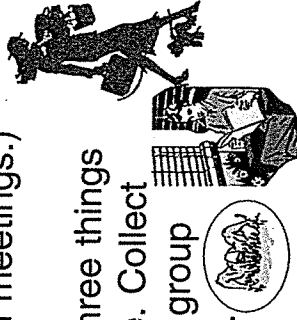
5. Have a member summarize a discussion that is in progress.

Group Building Activities

Allow time for bonding activities in your agenda. These will relax everyone and get the meeting off to a good start. A happy group is a productive group! Below are a few ideas you can try.

1. Pass around a box that contains a variety of items. Each person is to choose an item. When everyone has an item, have each group member tell how the object relates to his or her personality or life.
2. Instruct the members to think of two true statements about him or her self. Then have them think of something that is not true. Each person makes all three statements and the rest of the group must figure out the false statement. If the group is large, you can do this activity for a few members at several meetings.)

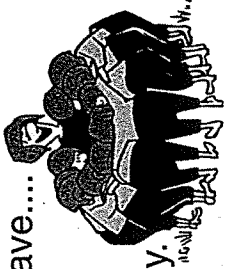
3. Instruct the group to write down three things he or she likes to do for leisure time. Collect the papers and read them. Have the group figure out who wrote each statement.



4. Give everyone paper and pencil. Invite them to make a simple time line of his or her life to share. Where were they born? Where did they grow up? What did they do in high school, college, and beyond? Post the time lines and allow time to look at them.

5. Ask a question for everyone to answer: In one minute or less, tell us... "What would you do if you had 24 hours to spend as you like? Other questions ideas are: Where would you like to go on vacation? What

Who is on your team? Hopefully you have....



Ida Idea--Groups need people that can dream big, enthusiastically, and creatively.

Realistic Rita--"Rita" is needed to make certain that group goals and plans are possible enough to work on. Realistically, there is a limited amount of energy, money, and time.

On-Task Teresa--There must be a balance between building relationships and getting things done. Teresa is a must to keep productivity up.

Details Deillah--Groups benefit from planning out all the minor parts of a project in order to make it high quality.

Team-builder Tammy--A happy group works together better! Tammy will boost morale!

Contact Connie--Groups are effective when they can work together with others. Have members willing to access external resources.

Whole Picture Helen--A group benefits from members that can put all the details/ideas into one big picture



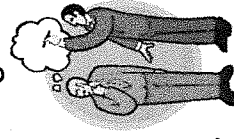
Understand the importance of having different opinions

Just as everyone will contribute differing personalities to the group, everyone will have varying backgrounds and perspectives. This creates differences of opinions. Sometimes opinions are based on incorrect facts, better known as rumors.

Sometimes, too, opinions are incorrect assumptions based on limited information. Be aware of how you express yourself and be patient with others in your group. Take the time to understand one another's point of view in order to make the best decisions possible.

Encourage all to participate/share ideas/ information.

- ✓ Accept incomplete ideas. You could say, "I'd like to hear more about that idea," to help develop their thought.
- ✓ Prevent others from being cut off or interrupted. You could say to another, "I'd like to hear what else Susy had to say."
- ✓ State problems in a way that does not sound accusing.
- ✓ When presenting a problem, be prepared with possible solutions, but be open to the solutions of others.
- ✓ Look for connections between one another's ideas. Point out similarities and connections.
- ✓ Continually summarize your understanding of decisions made and steps needing to be taken.
- ✓ Stick to the items on the agenda.
- ✓ Avoid: criticizing ideas, lengthy comments that take time from others, and speaking only to a few of the members.
- ✓ Summarize the contributions of participants; summarize both content and feeling. "You believe that..." "You feel angry when..."



As the leader, you will want to inform your members of these important guidelines. In addition to this, you will need to do the following:

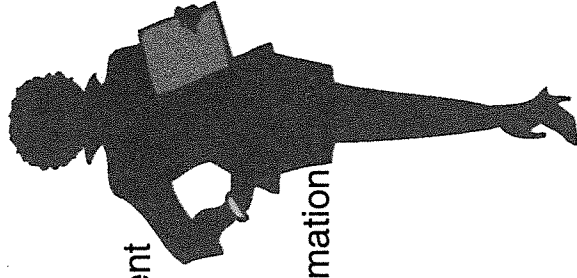
12. Has the atmosphere been friendly?
yes a little not enough

Leaders can write notes to members about what they've done well.

Self-Evaluation

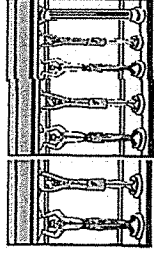
1. Am I tolerant of others that are different from me? Y Sometimes N
2. Do I try to get as much accurate information as possible? Y Sometimes N
3. Do I encourage others to talk? Y Sometimes N
4. Do I talk without taking time away from others? Y Sometimes N
5. Do I share my opinion even if I'd rather stay quiet? Y Sometimes N
6. Do I avoid complaining, attacking, or dominating? Y Sometimes N

After doing the evaluation, have members make their own personal goal for the following meetings.





Activities you can do to develop an effective team:

Group Evaluation



Select someone to complete this evaluation regularly. Have the secretary keep the records so progress can be discussed or checked.

1. Did we begin on time? Y N
2. Are members prepared? Y N
3. Is there an agenda? Y N
4. Did the group focus on the agenda? (Make a mark each time extended "off topic" discussions occur.)
5. Did everyone participate? (Write names of members, make a mark each time he or she contributes a comment.) 
6. Do members paraphrase or restate points? (Make a mark for each time.)
7. Do members build on the comments of one another's comments and ideas? (Mark most some few)
8. Do members summarize in order to check for understanding? most some few
9. Do members back up points with data and reasons? 
most some few
10. Were decisions made using an effective strategy? Y N
11. Are members clear about what they are to do? most some few

Be prepared (on time) with an agenda.

Your agenda should include a review of old business, a treasurer's report, and a list of all the issues that need to be discussed. Most importantly, set time for an overview and a final summary of your agenda outline. During your summary, make plans for following up.

Prioritize your agenda, and know how much time you feel should be spent on each task. Or, you can have your members choose what the priorities are and how much time should be spent on each item.

When summarizing throughout the meeting, make note of where a discussion started, where it went, and where it is now.



Plan effective discussion strategies.

Good discussions happen when everyone is willing to reveal their opinions, listen to others' concerns, are able to see how another's point of view ties with their own, and desire as much accurate information on an issue as possible. Disagreement in the meeting is normal and healthy; however, members should not try to "win" a point. The goal should be to find the most beneficial ideas, plans, or solutions, not "your" idea or solution.

Below are ways you can set up your meeting in order to encourage good discussions.

- Allow everyone to write their own thoughts on an issue or idea that has been presented. Then, with a partner discuss each other's thoughts. Finally, allow time for each person to present their partner's comments.

- Allow members to brainstorm ideas on the issue and write ideas on a flip chart. Then, ask each member to rank the best five ideas. The best gets a 5, the next best idea gets a 4, etc. Tabulate the points and discuss the top two or three answers.
- Form small groups and give time to come up with a list of ideas. In this group instruct members to allow each person an opportunity to talk.
- When appropriate, after a discussion on an issue, allow time for everyone to offer a single sentence summary of their thoughts.
- Pass the Pen: Provide a pen and paper for several small groups (3 to 5 people). Pass the pen around so that each member can jot down an idea. Set a time limit and see which group can come up with the most ideas.

As members are sharing ideas, manage the participation and keep the atmosphere friendly. You can help do this by encouraging humor and doing team building activities. Keep discussions on track, too. Be cautious of the time and set time limits on certain discussions if necessary.



Select a Recorder

Ensure that good "meeting memory" notes are taken. These are more than the traditional minutes a secretary must keep. Make sure the recorder numbers the pages and writes large and legibly. These notes should highlight decisions made, and the "who/what/when" of assigned tasks. The recorder should try to make the notes accurately reflect what took place at the meeting and the members' feelings.

Understand the stages of group development

In a group in its *first stage*, members may feel anxious. It is a time for *getting acquainted* and understanding the goals and tasks of the group. As a leader, you will want to help timid new members feel comfortable. Be aware that more clarifications and directions may be necessary during this stage.

As the group becomes more familiar with one another, the *second stage* of fun and excitement begins. However, tensions and conflict may also occur. This is a time of *reassessing goals and exploring options*. As a leader, you will act as a coach in order to help guide the group through the many issues that are presented.

The *third stage* is a time of *cohesion*. The group can begin to think as a group now that the members understand one another and have developed rapport with one another. The group will make important decisions and the leader acts, now as a supporter.

The *fourth stage* is that of *closure and completion*. The group should be careful not to procrastinate or become focused on the social aspects of the group. The group must be implementing the programs and the leader should be delegating responsibilities.

Finally, the group is at the *last stage of regrouping or disbanding*. It may be a time of sadness, but it can also be a time to reenergize for new activities.

