

# The Urban Group's Tips for Productive Meetings

## + A Written Agenda

- Agenda items should be submitted to the leader a few days in advance of any meeting and the agenda distributed to the participants at least the day before the meeting (preferably earlier than that). This will give the participants time to think through what they want to discuss and also be prepared to respond to agenda items submitted by others. It will also give the participants an idea of what the leader plans to discuss so they can be prepared.
- As the leader you can ask at the beginning of the meeting if there are additional matters each member wants to discuss to be added to the agenda. This will allow for anything urgent that surfaced after the agenda was printed.
- Also at the beginning of the meeting, it might be helpful to determine how much time each person needs to discuss his or her portion of the meeting as that will help with time management.

## + Meeting Ground Rules

- It is the leaders role, as well as the group's, to enforce the ground rules. If the group or team isn't enforcing them then the leader must in order to manage the meeting effectively.
- The leader also needs to follow the ground rules and model them.

## + Help Candid Discussions be More Productive

- Candid conversations are important for teams and it is helpful for the leader to encourage these kinds of discussions. However the leader also needs to be prepared to help the discussions be productive.
- For example it is important if the parties involved repeated to each other what they heard the other person(s) saying to see if they really understand each other's points or positions. The leader might have to instruct the parties to follow this process if their discussion is unproductive and going in circles.

## + Keep a Record of the Meeting and Use a White Board or Flip Chart

- Write down important points that come up in the meeting and capture "next steps" (including who is responsible and the time deadline) so everyone is clear about what they need to do or what is expected of them after the meeting. Remember to distribute this information to help ensure follow-through.
- Before the meeting concludes, ask what needs to be put on the agenda for the next meeting. This captures items that are the group's collectively and helps with buy-in.
- Sometimes important items get lost in the meeting minutes so this adds emphasis to make it clear what issues need follow-up or further discussion.

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