

## TIPS TO PRESIDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

1. Never start a meeting without an agenda. An agenda might also be called a list of things to be covered by the meeting. An agenda saves time. An agenda keeps a meeting on the beam. It should never be veered from.
2. Introduce any new members or guests present.
3. State the purpose of the meeting if called for a special purpose. Odd as it may seem, members of a meeting are not always acquainted with why they are there. They should be so acquainted. It helps them concentrate on what the meeting is to accomplish. Also, it helps direct their thinking.
4. Keep the meeting going. Just as a meeting is seldom any better than its chairman, so it is seldom any more productive than the interest shown in it by its participating members. Interest flags when action lags. KEEP THE MEETING MOVING.
5. Speak clearly. As the chairman you are the spearhead of the meeting. You have the agenda. You know what it is all about. If you can't be heard, you can't exercise control. If you have a very low speaking voice, rap for silence before you speak.
6. Prevent general hubbub. When everybody talks at once, nobody can be heard, nothing can be accomplished. Insist on order.
7. Avoid talking to individuals without talking to the group. Side conversations between the chairman and individual members may unintentionally disrupt the meeting.
8. Keep the members talking clearly and audibly. If a member asks for the floor and is given it, it is up to you to see that he makes proper use of it. Interrupt him if necessary and have him repeat what he has said if you have the slightest suspicion that not everyone has heard him.
9. Sum up what the speaker has said and obtain a decision. Not all the members will be good at expressing themselves. It is up to you to determine what they have said and whether or not it has been understood; and get the decision of all the members on the topic.
10. Stop aimless discussion by recommending subcommittee study. Occasionally subjects are discussed on which general agreement at the time cannot be reached. On such occasions, submit the matter to further study by a subcommittee, which you appoint.

11. Keep control of the meeting at all times without stifling free comment. Invite criticism and even disagreement. Also ask for support. And clarify issues by obtaining majority approval.
12. Don't argue with the speaker. Ask questions if you disagree; but remember -- you're supposed to be neutral. Nobody can be positively neutral; but you, as chairman, must remain as neutral as possible. No matter how ardently you feel, let the meeting make the decision. Remember -- you're conducting a symphony, not playing a solo.
13. If you have a comment, ask for the floor as a participant. As chairman, you must retain the respect of the meeting. If you feel called upon to participate in partisan discussion, ask for the floor as a participant. Otherwise, you are ruining your chances as chairman.
14. Don't squelch a troublemaker. Let the meeting do it. Call such troublemaking to the attention of the whole gathering. Again, you must remain impartial. It's the duty of the meeting to pass judgment, not yours. Let the meeting pass judgment not only on issues but on conduct of individual members.
15. Be aware of the participants' comfort -- temperature-wise, thirst-wise, etc. Members of a meeting are human beings. They are subject to physical laws as well as to your authority. Your meetings can accomplish more if all the members are comfortable and have all their physical needs attended to.
16. Check at the end of the meeting to determine that every member feels his particular subjects have been adequately covered. As good as you may become, you are still subject to oversights. It is your duty to see that sound and just decisions are arrived at. Doublecheck at the end of the meeting just to be sure.
17. Familiarize yourself with Robert's Rules of Order. Know specifically parliamentary procedure. (see booklet on Parliamentary Procedures, also in kit.)