Committee Orientation

- Committee Humor
- About Committees
- Link to the Board
- Meeting Tips
- The Roles of the Chair, Vice Chair and Members

“A camel is a horse designed by a committee.”

Football combines the two worst things about America: It is violence punctuated by committee meetings.

COMMITTEES

If you could identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be “meetings.”

If you have forever, form a committee.

If you have hate, form a committee.

A committee is a group that keeps minutes and loses hours.

11th Commandment: Thou shalt not commit.

Committee: a group which succeeds in getting something done only when it consists of three members, one of whom happens to be able and the other two absent.

A committee is a normal operation success, formed to guarantee that no one person can be held to blame for a butchered job that one could have performed otherwise.
So...what should we do this year?

"I'm beginning to wonder if our terms of reference may be just a little bit too broad..."

The subcommittee to oversee the current committee across investigation,
I'll give a committee to look into it.

"I think we should form a committee to look into the 'individual initiative' thing."
Woodrow Wilson

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Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition…..whilst Congress in its committee rooms is Congress at work.
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Purposes

• Think tank and assembly of doers.
• Fresh ideas and resources.
• Leadership opportunities.
• Assistance and input to staff.
• Deeper awareness of the organization by committee members.

Terminology

• Standing Committees – Identified the bylaws – lasting for the year.
• Executive Committee – Authorized by the bylaws to conduct business between board meetings.
• Ad Hoc* and Task Force – Appointed for a specific purpose and then disbanded.
• Special - Forums, Committees, Councils, Teams, Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
Committees Have Value

• Committee Can Produce Valuable Work Products (manuals, courses, etc.)
• Respect everyone’s time.
  – Value time. i.e. $50 hours x 10 persons is a $500 contribution.
• Anticipate outcomes – what value will the committee add to the organization?
• Query committee members – what resources do they bring to the table?

Common Committees

• Executive Committee
• Finance, Budgeting
• Audit
• Program, Conference
• Education
• Membership
  – Recruitment & Retention
  – Benefits & Services
• Nominations
• Government Relations
• Nominations
• Government Relations

Fundamentals

• Clear Mission – Purpose*
• Chair and Vice Chair
• Committee File or Notebook - history
• Timeline – Calendar of Meetings
• Liaison with Staff and/or Board Designee
Meeting Format
Start to Finish
- Introductions - Welcomes
- Comfortable – Time Frames – Agenda
- Describe Charges – Update Progress
- Outcomes – Expectations of the Meeting
- Reports – Resources Reviewed/Assigned
- Discussion – Evaluation
- Assignments – Deadlines – Action Steps
- Next Meeting Date

Committee Liaisons - Links
(Board and/or Staff)
- Monitors and reports on progress.
- Conduit for information flow.
  – Liaison to the board of directors.
  – Link to the staff – resources.
- Overcomes problems and challenges of the committee.
- Advises on resources.
- Mentors future leaders.

Aligned with Goals and Linked to Board
Set Clear Goals

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

Example: The Forms Comm. will do a review of all business forms with the intent of eliminating old forms and adding at least one new product by mid-year.

3 Parts to a Meeting

- Before – Plan, Anticipate, Prepare
- During – Effective Meeting, Tackle Work
- After – Follow Through, Reports, Closure

Meetings Tips

- Have a reason to meet.
- Draft a good agenda – a flow of work.
- Use staff and/or board liaison – utilize available resources.
- Show appreciation to all volunteers.
- Respect time. Respect ideas.
- Take minutes or ask someone to record notes.
- Use rules of order to stay on the agenda.
Meeting Ideas

- Mission statement on display.
- Name tags and/or tent cards.
- Room set-up: comfortable, refreshments, paper and pens.
- Agenda and reports at the table.
- Antitrust avoidance noted.
- List of common acronyms.
- Digital distractions?

Summarize Outcomes

“It was a nice meeting, but what exactly did we decide?”

Use an Agenda

PSSST, I'M BACK. ARE THEY WRAPPING IT UP YET?

NO, THEY'RE STILL ON "OPENING REMARKS"
More Effective Committees

Nobody Asked Me

- Preparation
- Follow-Through
- Communication
- Sees the Big Picture
- Multitasks Well
- Respect for Other’s Agendas
- Desire to Achieve Results

Cleaning Up Committees

- No sacred cow committees.
- No report from a committee in years – dump it.
- Aligned with organizational goals. (i.e. six major goals = six standing committees.)
- Necessary? A personnel committee? Building committee? Done their time?
- ReStructure – nominations transformed into “board development committee.”
- Trends – Audit Committee.
Power - Authority

• Limited by the bylaws – read them.
• Limited by the charge or work assignment.
  (no freelancing in the committee - the board
  wants to know what you are doing.)
• May **not** contract for the organization nor
  spend resources without explicit OK.

The Committee **Member**

• **Know the committee purpose-mission.**
• **Ask about history** and prior achievements.
• **Take it seriously.**
  – Prepare and attend participate.
• **Complete tasks – be responsible** to the
  committee and chairman.
• Step forward – **volunteer to help the
  committee** – share your resources.
• Envision yourself as next year’s chairman.

Too busy to Serve?

“Could you head up another committee, Bob .... or do you
feel that you’re wearing enough hats already?”
Roles of Chair - Vice Chair

- Know what is expected!
  - Work with the Chairman of the Board.
- Recruit and Motivate members.
- Send Notices & Reminders
  - Determine preferred communication methods.
- Stay on task — utilize an agenda.
  - Start on time >> End on time.
  - Keep the meeting moving.
- Summarize often.
- Use reports — minutes.
- Plan your succession — today.
- Thanks to everyone - Share the credit.

Summary: Best Committees

- Clear Purpose
- Fit within the Mission Statement
- Advances the Board’s Strategic Goals
- Meetings are Efficient
- Positive Outcomes

Resources

- BoardSource.org (nonprofits)
- ASAEnet.org (associations)
- ACCE.org (chambers)
- USChamber.org
- NonProfitCenter.com (nonprofits)

- Bob Harris, CAE — bob@rchcae.com
  - 850/570-6000
  - Board Orientation, Strategic Planning, Operating Audits