

Tips for a More Successful Meeting

Be flexible in setting meeting times. If it can't *always* be the fourth Wednesday of the month, then it can't. For example, Christmas might fall on that day. However, make sure that the exception *is* the exception.

Set a meeting schedule one year in advance and distribute it to all club members. And don't be shy about reminding members as many times and in as many ways as necessary: phone, fax, email, a rock with a note tied to it, whatever it takes.

Choose a meeting location that's easy to locate. Distribute a map ahead of time. Your meeting location should be conducive to conducting business.

Club officers have extra responsibilities. This may entail extra meetings for top brass prior to regular meetings. It will be worth it.

If your meetings regularly run into the next day, you're doing something wrong. Diagnose the problem and implement ways to streamline the session. See the next tip.

Consider using *Robert's Rules of Order*. You needn't run the meeting like a Senate hearing, but it shouldn't be a slumber party, either. The club president must *preside*. That's part of the title and that's part of the job.

All members need to speak up and help out. If their presentation—or any new business for which they're responsible—is due for the next meeting, they need to confirm that it will be on the meeting's agenda.

Proxy voting is a significant issue. On one hand, it can assure a quorum so that voting can be accomplished. Of greater concern is the crutch that it becomes for habitual absentees. Some clubs swear by it; others swear because of it.

Secretaries: don't read the minutes. Get them to the members beforehand and simply call for their approval. Most people dread speaking in public.

There will be inevitable disagreements between club members about how to handle the pool of cash. Keep it cool, stick to BetterInvesting's four principles.

You might also consider secret ballots on important or especially heated issues.

Regarding visual aids: we love 'em. If you've got a presentation to make, go to the nearest copy place and have your SSG and supporting documents copied for each member of the club.

The membership of your club will probably be a great source of educational information and potential guest speakers. Be sure to take advantage of the resources available to you.

Hold an annual meeting in addition to monthly meetings. Its purpose will be mostly celebratory—you will have earned it—but you can also use the event to summarize

and wrap up the year's progress, and perhaps even hold your elections. BetterInvesting suggests that your club consider holding the annual meeting/ elections in late March or April, so that the new treasurer can come in fresh after the club's tax returns have already been prepared.

Have a procedure in place to accept guest observers to your meeting. Look into other clubs' policies regarding the number of meetings a potential member must attend before declaring their candidacy for membership or being accepted as a member. You should also maintain a waiting list in the event of someone leaving the club.

No club is an island. Invite officers of another BetterInvesting-affiliated club in your area to attend one of your meetings. Have them observe, take notes, and then ask them to compare your methods with theirs. You're sure to pick up a tip or two. To reciprocate, send your own delegates to their next meeting. Who knows, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Perhaps the most meaningful suggestion—and it's more of a critical concept—is to be consistent. Don't let potential members sitting in on one meeting leave with the impression that the next meeting may look totally different. Note that this does not fly in the face of adapting and revising your operating procedures.