



**UNIT III:  
Group/  
Organizational  
Leadership  
Skills**

## **Module 2: Effective Meetings**

Would you plan a bus or airplane trip without consulting a schedule of times and destinations? Probably not. A meeting agenda is your group's schedule of departure and arrival. It marks the way toward achievement of goals.

What's going to happen at the next meeting? What business will be discussed? What issues will require a decision? Will someone give an informational report? Don't be taken by surprise at your meeting...Plan! First prepare a list of what business to discuss. The list should name only items that require the attention of the membership. Next, consider how items will be presented, what to discuss, and how to present it. Remember that all of the group can and should be involved in planning and participating at meetings.

### **The Agenda**

An agenda is a step-by-step order of points to be covered. A tentative agenda should be sent to all members prior to the meeting:

- To insure that important business is not overlooked.
- To remind people of the meeting.
- To help members identify important items and prepare to discuss them.
- To help members focus on issues, to contribute, and to feel a sense of progress.
- To insure meetings start on time, move forward and stop on time.

### **Developing the Agenda**

Days or even weeks before the meeting, the facilitator, chairperson, or presiding officer should begin preparing the agenda. This person should review program plans and actively involve other officers, chairs, and group members who may have items of business to offer.<sup>1,2</sup>

### **Expected Action**

Agendas that are too brief or vague can actually hinder the progress of a meeting. Properly prepared agendas, on the other hand, almost always make meetings run smoothly. In a well-prepared agenda, items are elaborated. For example: An item listed simply as "Fairboard Report" doesn't tell us very much; adding "select representatives and consider alternative date" says more. Be certain to indicate the expected action for each item. Here are some common phrases for conveying expected action: "for information," "for discussion," and "for decision." These phrases will help members anticipate and prepare for the action. If a particular person has responsibility for an item, place that person's name in parentheses just below or to the right of the item. This information tells members who the contact person is and serves as a guide for the chair.<sup>1</sup>

### **Setting Priorities**

The order of items can be critical to the success of a meeting. For some items, the order is obvious. For example, you usually don't discuss the budget for equipment purchases before you discuss your equipment needs. Some agenda orders, however,