

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING

An important part of PowerTalk International training is learning how to be a leader or member in a committee assignment. On the www.powertalkinternational.com website there is a wealth of information regarding in how to have an effective committee. Also the Master Manual under Section 9.4 provides information about committee duties and responsibilities. This information can be found on the website under the membership Resource section for educational training and type in the search word “committee”.

A workshop on leadership and committee performance would be a wonderful topic for a club or council meeting. You could also make this a community event by providing leadership training. Another suggestion is to combine with another club to have a longer meeting to provide leadership and committee training. **REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT A COMMITTEE OF ONE!**

The rest of the article is a summary of some of highlights of the Educational Feature, *Effective Committee Functioning*, that is available on the PowerTalk International website.

Committees expedite the business of an organization by permitting detail work to be done by special groups and so save time in larger meetings. For an individual, committee work develops a broad range of skills, including listening, analytical thinking, parliamentary procedure, goal setting, planning, time management, research, organizational techniques, speaking and discussion techniques, writing, cooperation, responsibility, and many other skills important for effective leadership.

The duties of a committee member are to attend all meetings, participate in committee discussion, accept and fulfill their assignments, and support the committee decisions. The duties of a chairperson is to have a clear understanding of the committee assignment and work to be accomplished, prepare a work schedule for committee members, select meeting time(s) and place(s), prepare agenda, lead discussion, and prepare and present written reports. It is important to maintain committee records for the appropriate time required by the bylaws.

Two sources of problems with a committee are that members are not clear on their duties and a few members dominate committee discussion. Listed below are some helpful hints to monitor and control a committee meeting.

- Discuss what is to be accomplished
- Make special assignments and establish reporting dates
- Maintain a positive attitude toward the assignment
- Lead, not dominate, discussion
- Give all an opportunity to be heard, but allow none to dominate discussions
- Negotiate, if necessary, to reach a compromise acceptable to all

Pam Montague

SPR President