

Things that can help you be a great chair



What's it all about?

These are some ideas you can use to become great chairs. They are not the only things you can use and you will work out what works best for you but they are a good start

How you present yourself



Remember that you do not have to be everybody's friend as a chair but you do have to be respectful (as does everybody else). This means you will have to listen to other people's views and be polite.

You will often be the 'face' of the meeting so you will need to think about what you wear and that you are a champion or leader for your group. This will mean being positive and supporting others even when times are tough

You will also need to be clear about the values of you group and what the meeting is about.

Managing your diary



Like any job it is important to manage your diary and being a chair is not just about going to 'the meeting'. It might be an idea to get a diary and possibly somebody to help you manage this.

Lots of people talk to each other through emails these days so you might want set up your own account.

A good idea is to work out what is urgent and important. The urgent things are what you need to do first

When things are not going well

As a chair part of your job is to make sure the meeting is working the best it can be. A good way to do this is to talk to people outside the meeting who can give advice. This might be someone else who also chairs meetings. These people might become your mentor.

Sometimes you might want to have days where your group members talk about how things are going. Sometimes these are called away days or review days.



When people are difficult

Sometimes people do not act in a good way at meetings. They might not be polite or they might start arguments. There are two things you can use to stop this happening.

The first are the ground rules of the meeting. These are every body's responsibility to make happen and during the meeting you can remind people of these. For example if everybody is talking over each other.

Lots of meetings and organisations have something called a code of conduct. These should be given to everybody when they join the group. They tell people how they should act. This could include how many meetings people have to go to and what they are there to do.

It might also say that you are not allowed to swear or drink alcohol when you are going to meetings.

Sometimes you might have to sound like a broken record! If somebody will not move on if they are not happy with something you might have to say...

"...Scott I understand you are not happy but we have to move on now. You can talk to me after the meeting if you want to but we are moving on to the next item..."

You might have to say this a few times.



Making good decisions



Making decisions at meetings can be hard because people have different ideas and this can be a good thing. If you are having trouble making decisions at meetings you might want to ask people to think about:

1. What are our values?
2. What is the role of the meeting
3. Do we have the money and things to make something happen
4. Are there enough or the right people in the room to make a decision



Recording what you have decided to do (and make sure other are doing what they say they would) can be made easy by writing in the minutes:

1. What has been decided
2. How it is going to happen
3. Who is going to do it
4. When they will do it

You can also have these on the wall as a reminder.



Good luck!

