

CHALLENGE

A Herff Jones IMPACT Resource For Students September, 2004

September CHALLENGE FIRST MEETING OF THE YEAR

Your first activity of the year that directly affects your membership is the first meeting. The meeting will tend to set the pace for your group's effectiveness during the school year. An outstanding first meeting makes a great first impression on the members and gives them an optimistic expectation of the group's activities for the year. A poorly conducted first meeting will turn your members and prospective members off to your organization which will reduce the effectiveness and success of the planned activities.

Here are some steps that can be taken to make sure that the first meeting is a successful one.

BEFORE THE MEETING...

1. Meet with your executive group and develop an agenda for the first meeting. Make sure everyone knows the total plan and is prepared for his or her part in it.
2. Have a meeting place which is easy to locate. Have a sign up to welcome new members.

3. Meeting announcements and posters should indicate the meeting start time as well as other necessary information.
4. Make copies of the agenda available to everyone as they enter the room.
5. Have seating that allows everyone to see the podium and hear what is being discussed. Always have extra chairs available. Set up so that late comers enter and sit in the rear of the room to minimize interruptions.
6. Have blank name tags and marking pens available for everyone.
7. Bring membership enrollment forms and a sufficient amount of pens and pencils.
8. Prepare a display of club photos, awards, scrapbooks, newsletters, etc.
9. Prepare and bring enough copies of printed handouts about the organization for every person. The handout should state the group's purpose and list the officers and how to contact them,

opportunities for future involvement, whom to contact about each opportunity, and any dues. Also summarize the group's recent accomplishments.

AS PEOPLE ENTER THE ROOM...

1. Have old members come early to greet newcomers, help with name tags, talk to the newcomers, and help with other parts of the meeting.
2. Have everyone fill out the membership information card and collect them immediately.
3. Give everyone an information sheet about the organization and invite them to read it.
4. Distribute copies of the agenda.
5. Invite each person to join. If they are ready to join let them join at the first meeting. Follow up after the meeting with those not yet ready to join.

This newsletter is a joint effort of Jackie Burch and Herff Jones, Inc.

STARTING THE MEETING . . .

1. Have the officers and old members help people get settled.
2. Start the meeting on time and have people at the door to greet any late-comers.
3. Introduce yourself as the President or chairperson.
4. Welcome the new people attending and recognize them if possible.
5. Welcome returning members.
6. Acknowledge returning members who have received special recognition such as awards, etc.

PRESENTING THE ORGANIZATION

1. Let all officers participate in the meeting in some way. This helps the President, gives them recognition, and informs others who the officers are.
2. Explain your organization's purpose.
3. Explain the group's organizational structure, but keep it as short and simple as possible.
4. Highlight major past accomplishments (refer to display.)
5. Review continuing projects which require involvement during the coming year.
6. Describe important upcoming events and how everyone can get involved.
7. Explain important decisions the group may face during the coming year.
8. Announce committee appointments or when they will be made. Explain to

new members how to get on a committee.

9. For fun, have an icebreaker/mixer and, if possible, serve refreshments.
10. End the meeting on time before members get bored.
11. Invite newcomers to talk to old members after the meeting and to turn in their membership cards.



AFTER THE MEETING . .

1. Make it easy for newcomers to contact officers and old members for information and to answer questions.
2. See newcomers about joining but do not oversell.
3. Clean up the meeting room.
4. Have the secretary complete the minutes and have the treasurer update the records.
5. Give the membership cards to the chairperson of that committee for further action.
6. Have the executive committee/board meet and evaluate the meeting and plan the next meeting.

Now this may seem very involved ,but just select the steps that will be useful to your group to improve the meetings.

Remember, in order for these to work for your group, they need to fit the style that the group is trying to achieve.



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"The greater part of our happiness depends on our disposition and not our circumstances"

Martha Washington

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