Running an Effective Chapter Officer Meeting

Preparing for your next chapter meeting can eliminate stress and improve your chapter's overall performance. Consider these steps for an effective chapter officers meeting.

1. Prepare the Meeting Agenda in Advance

Create your meeting agenda at least a few days before the meeting and send a reminder to all attendees, including any necessary attachments like financial statements or reports. This allows members to familiarize themselves with the information beforehand, increasing productivity during the meeting by reducing the time spent on reviews. Ensure the agenda is detailed and strict but include time for "new business" at the end.

2. Make the Meeting Agenda Strategic

Use the meeting agenda to guide strategic discussions. Focus on one main topic or goal per meeting. For example, if recruiting younger members is a priority, dedicate the meeting to strategies and progress on this goal. Appoint a member to remind the group to stay strategic by asking how each discussion point helps achieve the chapter's goals.

3. Keep the Meeting Agenda Mission-Focused

To align with SME National's mission, write the SME mission statement at the top of the agenda. Encourage officers to share their stories and what SME means to them. Reflect the strategic focus of SME membership—learn, engage, advance—in the agenda and discuss how your chapter is addressing these areas at the local level.

4. Start & End Your Meeting on Time

Start and end your meetings on time to show you value their time. Limit meetings to two hours or less to maintain attention and productivity, especially for evening meetings.

5. Focus on Decisions, Not Updates

Ensure the majority of the meeting is dedicated to decisions and strategic discussions rather than updates. Minimize lengthy information downloads by using a consent agenda for routine items like minutes and contracts. This allows more time for valuable discussions and decision-making on important issues.

6. Take Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are crucial for keeping officers focused and accountable. Distribute minutes within a week after the meeting to ensure action steps are fresh in everyone's

mind. Use the meeting agenda as a guide for taking notes and highlight actions and the individuals responsible for them. Follow best practices for recording minutes:

- Record participants as they enter.
- Note decisions and action items immediately.
- Seek clarification when necessary.
- Focus on outcomes, not detailed discussions.
- Avoid personal observations and use bold font for strategic actions.
- For phone or online meetings, have participants identify themselves before speaking.
- Edit for brevity and clarity.
- Make minutes easily accessible to officers.
- Use minutes to prepare the next meeting agenda.

7. Have a Good Nonprofit Board Chair

A good chair is essential for effective meetings. They should have knowledge of SME National, the manufacturing industry, and the local community. Effective chairs possess strong social and organizational skills, can handle diverse personalities, facilitate discussions, and ensure meetings run smoothly and on time. Rotate the chair role to develop board talent.

Risks of Poorly Run Chapter Officer Meetings

1. Mismanaged Meetings Can Lead to a Mismanaged Board

A poorly run meeting can damage the chapter's effectiveness and reputation.

2. Poorly Run Meetings Create Frustration and Confusion

Ineffective meetings lead to frustration and confusion among officers and members, decreasing satisfaction and engagement.

3. Ineffective Meetings Waste Time and Energy

Off-topic discussions and irrelevant commentary waste valuable time and energy, detracting from the chapter's goals.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure your chapter officer meetings are productive, strategic, and focused, contributing to the overall success of your chapter.