

Individual Committee Members – Making Meetings Better

In order to contribute to meetings members must:

- attend the meetings
- listen carefully
- arrive on time
- pay attention
- read the agenda
- say what you think
- read any papers
- keep to the point
- keep informed
- join in activities
- ask questions
- volunteer to help
- put items on the agenda
- help to clear up

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EXERCISE

Every member of a meeting has a responsibility to take part. This isn't always easy. Sometimes people don't know what their responsibilities are. Some people are shy and find it hard to speak, which makes it difficult to fulfil their responsibilities. Sometimes people are simply not that interested.

In the list above are 14 responsibilities of the ordinary member.

- 1 Read through the list and try to add some ideas of your own.
- 2 Rate yourself on a scale from 0 - 5 on how good you are at fulfilling each responsibility and fill this in the space on the right. [0 = not good at all, 5 = very good, 1, 2, 3 and 4 are the points in between]. If, for instance, you arrive early for every single meeting, give yourself '5' for arriving on time; if you are aware that you don't pay attention a lot of the time, for whatever the reason, you might give yourself '1' for paying attention; you might give yourself '3' for volunteering to clear up; and so on.
- 3 Divide your committee into pairs and ask them to discuss how good they are at fulfilling their responsibilities as ordinary members. They should consider why they find each responsibility easy or difficult and what would help them to fulfill their responsibility better.
- 4 Reform the group and ask for brief feedback from each pair. Then open a general discussion.
 - Which responsibilities are least well-fulfilled in your meetings? What effect does this have on the way meetings go?
 - Which responsibilities do people find hardest to fulfill? What would help people to fulfill them better? Is the problem to do with motivation or with lack of opportunity?