

# Case Study

Anatomy of a Productive Meeting

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WORKING FOR GOLF

R&A



## Introduction

Many golf clubs around the country are struggling to get people onto the committees or boards. Many positions aren't filled, younger members, women, and different ethnic groups are not being represented. One of the major reasons for people not wanting to be on these committees or boards is the way the meetings are held. The meetings can drag

on with nothing being accomplished and past grievances continually being revisited. Having a structure to the meetings will make them flow to a point where outcomes occur and this will make people want to be involved.



Members within golf clubs can see the meeting process as the bane of many clubs as well as the price to pay for being on a committee. Meetings are required for the decision-making process. Effective meetings will include a reporting process as well as holding those accountable for their actions. These meetings will also involve discussion around issues and solving the problems that arise. Many meetings do not look like this at all. Instead most people have been involved with meetings that have devolve into long discussions with no outcomes and a lone voice, or a couple of voices, being heard while many are not wanting to speak up. These experiences can change when meetings have a clear purpose that is effectively chaired, and the focus of the meeting being on decision making. To this end clubs can do a few things to make sure that meetings run efficiently and effectively.

## Agenda

The agenda acts as the road map for the meeting. It will point out the purpose of the meeting as well as its structure. The Chairperson and the Secretary should work together on creating the agenda which should be followed in order unless the meeting decides otherwise. All relevant documents, including the previous meetings minutes and any reports, should be sent out at least a few days before the meeting. All the documents that have been sent to the committee or board members should be assumed read at the time of the meeting. This will stop the often-laborious action of reading reports while people have the same report being read in front of them. This will greatly speed up the meeting and move the group onto the discussion and decision stage much more effectively. By presenting the previous meetings minutes before the meeting will allow people to submit any corrections they feel necessary early, and reduces even more time of reading these minutes out.

## Matters Arising

A list of matters arising should be decided upon before the agenda is sent out. These matters should only relate to matters that have arisen within the minutes and not relate to discussions that will occur around the reports. By having the previous meetings minutes sent out before the meeting, then any discrepancies can be fixed and any discussion that is needed is included in the agenda and the members can put forward any matters arising from those minutes. Matters arising from the minutes should be confined to specific questions or actions someone was appointed to take. This adds to the accountability of the committee itself.

## Reports

As stated before any reports to be presented at the meeting should be circulated before the meeting and classed as read by the committee before the meeting occurs. The reports should be constructed in a way that is easy for people to read. A simple formula for writing reports is:

- What?
- Who?
- When?
- How Much?
- Why?
- Where?
- How?
- Recommendations

Once the report has been accepted then the discussion around it and any actions that need to be taken can occur. The discussion should be brief and deal with only deal with specific topics.

## Motions

The clubs' rules should set out how much notice must be given for motions to be added to meetings and they must be put on the agenda. If a motion is proposed but it does not occur within the stipulated time then they may be rejected for the upcoming meeting but added to the agenda for the following meeting.

## Chairperson

As you can see from the above, the Chairperson must be the one controlling the tempo and content of the meeting. It is very easy for a few voices to derail a meeting and take it in a direction that is unproductive. The Chair should make sure that everyone has their voice heard, and not just a couple of the squeaky wheels. This is why the agenda is so important. Once that is set, then the Chair must

## Feedback

A few changes in the meeting process can make the meeting a productive and meaningful process. Showing the club that meetings are productive can get other members of the club to become part of committees. How many times are nominations called from the floor at AGM's to fill vacant positions on committees, or it is the same group of people that are recycled back onto committees every few years? To get views from all sections within

the club it is necessary to have meetings as being see as productive and a worthwhile part of being a club member.

The Regional Support Managers at New Zealand Golf can sit in on your meetings and suggest changes that could occur to make the meeting process a much more enjoyable and productive one for all involved.