

Facilitating meetings

1. **Always start with a “Go around” to check in on how everyone is feeling.** Ask a silly personal question “What is your favorite treat to buy at a puerto rican bakery?”
2. **Go over the agenda at the start of the meeting**
 - a. Put time allotments on each agenda item, and person to lead that part
 - b. Make sure the meeting does not go over 2 hours
 - c. Remind everyone of the ground rules for discussion
 - d. Use a google doc and take notes into it live at the meeting
3. **Be ruthless about interrupters.** Unfortunately some people naturally feel inclined to respond to every comment made during a meeting. These folks may not even know they are doing it, but it can be detrimental to the rest of the group being able to participate. The role of the meeting facilitator is to encourage maximum participation and buy in, and so interrupters must be made aware of their behavior and make a commitment to let others speak.
4. **Be ruthless about side conversations.** In order to build group cohesion we must all listen to each other when it is time for someone else to speak. Meetings have one topic at a time, and everyone is given the respect of the undivided attention of the group. Everyone there would like to be a part of a well run organization and having meeting etiquette is the first step toward establishing an effective group culture.
5. **Offer suggestions of where consensus is for the group.** “What is sounds like we are all comfortable with doing is...” and then ask for agreement or disagreement if that is indeed what everyone wants to move forward on.
6. **Always end with a go around asking folks what they are most excited to do to advance the group’s now agreed upon agenda.**

Facilitation tricks

“Go around” Have everyone speak one person at a time for exactly 1 minute in order of seating. No one else gets to unless it’s their turn for the go around. This ensures everyone in the group has an opportunity to speak, and 1 or 2 people do not dominate the conversation.

The Stack: When multiple people want to speak at the same time, use a speaking order. If anyone wants to speak, they raise their hand and have their name added to a list. Once the initial group has spoken as the group “Would anyone else like to be added to the stack?” Those who are more quiet or have not spoken on this issue yet always get put to the top of the list over those who have already spoken. Everyone always has the right to say “Pass”.

“Bike rack”: A written list of ideas that are good but off topic. Everyone has great ideas, but we can only act on a few of them. Sometimes our great ideas come to us when we are discussing something totally different. In order to not derail the entire conversation use a Bike Rack to list ideas we should consider later. Include the bike rack list as part of your meeting notes.