

GUIDE FOR COMMITTEES, TASKFORCES, AND NETWORKS FOR GPBR

The Challenge of Committee Participation

Whether one is chairing a committee or is a committee member, they face the challenge of getting involved in the work the committee was formed to accomplish.

A member's contribution and participation on a committee will determine its success or failure. When members participate, get involved, follow established protocols, and encourage others on the committee to do so, a committee is successful. Enthusiasm is contagious.

A committee's findings directly impact the decisions made by the Management Team (MT), officers, and the association's Board of Directors. The energy committee members put into their work on the committee directly influences the direction the association takes.

Serving on a committee is the first step toward leadership either in your personal life or within the association at the local, state, or even national level. It is on committees that individuals demonstrate, confirm, and master:

Building consensus	Discussion vs. debate
Robert's Rules of Order	Being concise
Due Diligence	Respect
Collegiality	Diplomacy
Grasp of issues	Communication
Openness to other ideas	Governance protocols

Functions of a Committee

The primary function of a committee is to contribute to the efficient operation of an organization. In most cases, a committee is concerned with the communication of information and with assisting leadership in the decision-making process by providing needed information.

The basic purpose of a committee is to determine, through its collective wisdom, which is usually superior to that of any one member, the best solution to a problem or clarity in strategic vision.

Committee Members: Unless otherwise provided for, volunteers are appointed because they are knowledgeable about or interested in the committee's area of activity. Committee members should know and/or are expected to learn:

- Specific responsibilities for the committee as defined by policy, the Board of Directors, or the CEO.
- Association's practices, protocols, policies, and procedures.
- Association's Strategic Plan as it relates to the activity of the committee.



Committee Members (continued):

- Responsibilities of the association staff (referred to as Members of the Management Team or MTM) to the committee and how it differs from that of the committee member
- Past performance of the committee.
- Reporting procedure to the Board of Directors.
- Understand the committee's realistic and attainable goals.
- Be involved and substantively participate.

Committee Participation: Effective committees do not just happen. They are a combination of the right individuals, a mission, good leadership, and the work of the MTM. Committees are not "think tanks" for others to implement, they are "action groups".

Committee members are expected to know and are asked to:

- Make an informed decision.
- Study the meeting agenda and supporting material carefully before each meeting.
- Ask for clarification if items are unclear.
- Stick to the meeting agenda.
- Notify the Chair and MTM two weeks in advance of the meeting regarding a request for the addition of an agenda item.
- When adding items to the agenda, include written specifics and relevant materials that allow committee members sufficient time to do due diligence on the topic and make an informed decision.
- New business not on the agenda, brought up at the meeting, will be added to the next meeting's agenda unless determined to be of a critical or time-sensitive nature (an avoidable short deadline is not "time-sensitive").
- Determine in advance how and what you wish to contribute to the meeting.
- Keep comments short and to the point. Seek information or state an opinion, do not deliver a soliloquy.
- Speak when recognized by the chair.
- Wait until you have the attention of all present before speaking so everyone can hear.
- Repeat others' remarks only if you think they were unheard.
- Do not hesitate to comment, critique, or disagree regarding an idea. However, know your subject and seek support from members.
- Make your comments at the proper time if you disagree with previous remarks.
- Ask for the floor rather than joining in an aimless group discussion if you have a comment. If what you have to say is a genuine contribution and makes a difference, you do not want to let it get lost in confusing conversation.
- Use a summary of your convictions when speaking. If your remarks are lengthy, some may forget your objective before you finish.
- Do not pass motions hastily. It is better to table an item until the next meeting when additional detail is required.



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Even with capable members on a committee, a firm goal to achieve, and the support of the Management Team, a committee without strong focused leadership will be hampered. The most consistent help for a Committee Chair will come from the Association's Management Team. The Chair's ability to work with Management Team Members (MTM) will determine their success as committee chair. The following helps explain why:

- The Association CEO, MTM, President, and President-elect will assist with the selection of committee members and setting objectives for the coming year unless otherwise stated.
- The Board of Directors reviews committee work and communications regularly.
- Committee success will largely depend on the chair's ability to preside and guide the committee to a definite goal following accepted association protocols.
- Guidelines for running productive meetings:
 - Start meetings on time.
 - Because all of our Governance Meetings are Virtual to conserve time, participants in general and the chair in particular need to:
 - Join meetings on a device that enables you to have full visibility of all participants and materials.
 - If chair is unable, either the vice-chair (if able) or the MTM will conduct the meeting.
 - Use the agenda sent to committee members in advance.
 - Committee members should receive all the information relating to an issue, both pro, and con.
 - Review the committee's goals relative to the Association's Strategic Plan.
 - Make sure individuals taking the floor talk clearly and audibly.
 - Minutes are to be kept of each meeting and distributed to all committee members and the entire Management Team.
 - Guide, mediate, probe, and stimulate discussions. Let others thrash out ideas; committees are not formed to validate the chairs or MTM thinking. The committee belongs to the Association, not the Chair, or the MTM.
 - Have all comments addressed to the Chair to avoid personality conflicts.
 - Encourage a clash of ideas, but not personalities. Good decisions are made when committees examine all sides of an issue.
 - Do not allow members to personalize the debate. A passionate discussion of an idea is good, but an emotional reaction is bad. When emotions are high, return the floor to a neutral person, seek a factual answer, or take a break.



- Keep discussions on track; periodically restate the issue and the goal of the discussion.
 - Control talkative members and try to draw out silent ones.
 - Deal with dysfunctional behaviors. Do not let a person who is blocking constructive discussion disrupt the committee meeting. This may include placing the individual or individuals on mute in virtual meetings.
 - Use well-placed questions, seek points of information and clarification, and keep discussion focused.
 - Keep the group focused on the central question and move toward a decision.
 - Call on newer members first to express their views; discussions tend to "close down" after senior members express strong views.
 - Seek consensus, but unanimity is not required. Do not compromise a good idea by trying to get everyone to completely agree.
 - Close the meeting by noting achievements.
- **Order of Business:** The following is the generally accepted sequence or order of business, that is observed for a meeting:
 - Call the meeting to order *on time*.
 - Take Attendance
 - Review the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - Discuss and resolve agenda items as they are listed.
 - New Business
 - Note date and time of next meeting
 - Adjourn the meeting *on time*.
- **Agendas** need to be developed and sent to all members of the committee at least one week in advance of the meeting. It should include all topics to be discussed at the meeting and should also include the date, location, starting time, scheduled breaks, and anticipated adjourning time. Any supporting or background material to further explain or detail the items on the agenda should be included.
- **Committee Chair Responsibilities:** With a designated Association MTM (or MT Liaison), the Committee Chair develops a plan that will allow the committee to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities for the year. The Chair and members of the MTM develop agendas for committee meetings to accomplish the committee's goals.
 - The Committee Chair and MTM are responsible for keeping leadership and staff fully informed of committee activities.
 - The MTM works with the Committee Chair to ensure that the work of the committee is carried out in a timely manner between meetings. They maintain records and relevant information on committee work allowing knowledgeable interaction between all involved.
 - The Committee Chair reports on decisions of the Board of Directors or other Association committees that may affect the committee's work or activities.



- Annually, the Committee Chair may be expected to evaluate the committee's work and communicate accomplishments to the Board of Directors.
- In addition to the general committee charge, which outlines the committee's scope of activity, the Association CEO or President may charge the committee with specific work. The Committee Chair and MTM are responsible for keeping the work of the committee focused on the charge and aligned with the association's strategic plan. Annually, the chair and MTM are expected to make recommendations to the CEO and President-elect regarding the future work of the committee.
- Committees may not commit to the expenditure of funds and may not express opinions or represent positions in the name of the Association unless specifically authorized by the BOD. In proposing a program or activity that may involve the expenditure of funds, committees must submit a program description and budget to the CEO for inclusion in the Association budget and/or for approval by the Board of Directors.

Generally Accepted Qualities of an Effective Committee Chair

- Communication skills
 - Demonstrates ability to effectively communicate with committee members, staff, members of the public, and others.
 - Demonstrates willingness to listen (not dominating the conversation).
- Participation
 - Demonstrates active participation and interest in the association.
 - Facilitate discussion vs. dominate it: allowing the group to synergize, asking questions that enable members to craft a better final product.
 - Knows the subject in which the committee is involved.
 - Thinks in terms of association goals.
- Leadership
 - Commands attention and inspires others.
 - Demonstrates ability to create a positive collaborative environment.
 - Controls without dominating.
 - Has command of the association's required protocols
 - Understands how the committee fits into the larger work of the association.
- Administrative skills
 - A willingness to take the initiative without going rogue
 - Demonstrates ability and willingness to carry out responsibilities.
 - Supports orderly procedures for conducting work.
 - Understands the role of the Association Management Team and that of an MTM.
 - Makes certain the MTM are included in all meetings of the committee or its subgroups



- Parliamentary Procedure
 - Committees are not required to operate using parliamentary procedure; however, the objectives and principles of parliamentary procedure should be employed.
 - The **objectives** of the parliamentary procedure include expediting business, maintaining order, ensuring justice and equity for all, and accomplishing the objectives for which the group is organized.
 - The **principles** of the parliamentary procedure include courtesy and justice to all, rule of the majority while respecting the rights of the minority, partiality to none, protection of the absentee, and taking one item of business at a time.

Management Team Members (MTM) and/or MT Liaisons to Committees, Taskforces, and Networks

- Participate as active members in committees, taskforces, or networks as facilitators and coordinate activities.
- They are accountable to the association as a responsibility of employment for the actions of all committees, taskforces, and networks in their delivery of the best member experience. Their administrative duties include:
 - Responsible to the association for all contracts, venue arrangements including scheduling, and vendor agreements
 - Must approve all marketing including sponsorship outreach
 - Meet the objective of delivering the best member experience.
 - Follow established marketing requirements
 - Will include expenditure accounting where applicable
 - Only the MTM can finalize arrangements with facilities operators, speakers, presenters, vendors, etc. An MTM is to be included in all communications with stakeholders if not being conducted by the MTM
- Other requirements and responsibilities of the MTM:
 - While allowing tasked responsibilities to be given sufficient time to be performed, when not completed in time, they are expected to complete those responsibilities to meet deadlines. It is not, however, the role or responsibility of the MTM to do the committee's work which may mean scheduled programs failing to meet required timelines will be canceled (a committee's inability to meet deadlines cannot become the MT's crisis).
 - Serve as an informed resource to the Chair and members of the committee.
 - Assist in facilitating activities and participate in committee discussions, and decision-making including voting and making motions or any other activities that address the committee's charge.



- The MTM works to ensure that all committee work is consistent with the Association's goals and objectives and delivers what has become known as GPBR Great!
 - Provide thorough orientation for each committee chair and assist the chair in providing orientation for new and continuing committee members each year.
 - Work with the Chair to develop an action plan allowing the committee to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities for the year.
 - Work with the Chair to develop agendas and conduct effective meetings.
 - Provide administrative support, including but not limited to, planning and execution of all committee meetings.
 - Draft committee meetings minutes for review and approval by the committee and seeing that they are distributed to the Board of Directors.
 - Work with the Chair, other committee members, and MTM to support the work of the committee between committee meetings.
 - Facilitate communication of committee activities, including requests for action and/or proposed policies, to the MT and Board of Directors.
 - See that a report to the committee on decisions of the Board of Directors, the MT, or other association committees which impact the committee's activities are communicated.
 - Where appropriate, assist the committee in proposing products and services that will further the goals and objectives of the Association and deliver the best member experience.
 - Be a valuable resource to the committee, not simply a recording secretary. Note: Too large an MTM role reduces the value of the committee and reduces the motivation of volunteers. Too small an MTM role results in the committee drifting aimlessly and operating ineffectively.
 - Be thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the committee's work, including the scope of work, subjects under discussion, and Association policies related to the committee's work.
 - Answer questions, offer suggestions, and raise questions.
- Orientation of the Chair by the MT Liaison
 - Review the role of an MTM, the duties of the Chair, the committee's previous work and the charge, and goals for the coming year and link them to the Association's strategic plan.
 - Review ongoing or likely committee projects and programs as well as assignments of individual committee members and develop a process for completion.
 - Clarify governance protocols and procedures. Review and clarify the bounds of the committee's activity and authority. Review the association's bylaws and relevant association policies, practices, and procedures that affect the committee.
 - Note where the work of other committees may overlap with or affect other groups.
 - Determine how the work of the committee will be efficiently communicated.



- Provide the following background information: a committee roster (and perhaps the previous year's); minutes of previous committee meetings; background on recent committee activities and accomplishments; and a list of the Board of Directors members, key staff, and other people with whom the chair is likely to interact.
- Minutes
 - The person charged with taking the minute (Secretary) is solely responsible for their content.
 - Before sending out to the committee a draft of the minutes, the Secretary may seek additional input from an attendee.
 - Include the name of the committee, date, time, and place of the meeting. Note the chairperson's name, members present and absent, and other key people in attendance.
 - Record all formal motions and passage or defeat.
 - Do not note the maker of a motion, the motion's second, or how any member voted, because all decisions of the committee are deemed unanimous and discussion confidential.
 - Note all decisions reached, including motions passed and follow-up actions required, with deadlines for implementation.
 - Include a summary of discussions (Do not attribute comments to members).
 - Provide information on the time and place of the next meeting.
 - Distribute the minutes to all committee members, including those who did not attend, within thirty (30) days of the meeting, which then are approved at the next meeting of the group.
 - In most instances, once finally prepared, meeting minutes do require formal approval by the committee at its next meeting.

In conclusion:

The above guide is prepared in an effort to produce a best member experience for those who willingly engage in the business of the association. We thank you for your time and commitment to the mutual respect needed to facilitate good governance.

