



LEADING EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES

This Leading Effective Committees textbook is partly extracted from RI online Learning Center course. Please visit the Rotary Learning Center for further information needed on the Rotary website: [Rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org)

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Leading Effective Committees

Course Description

Manage your committee effectively by learning how to set goals, motivate other members, plan productive meetings, delegate tasks, and cultivate leaders.

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Preparing your committee

When you lead a committee, remember to communicate your expectations. That makes it easier for committee members to coordinate efforts, share ideas, and achieve goals.

In leading your committee, be sure to engage the other members by communicating consistently and candidly. Tell them what you expect from them, particularly how they can help achieve the committee's goals.

Develop job descriptions for committee members so they understand their roles. Invite new members to give their opinions because they might have fresh perspectives that can help keep your committee dynamic.

To prevent too much of the work from falling to any one person, think about how to share the committee's responsibilities. Consider these questions when dividing the work:

- Is the amount of work for each person reasonable?
- Can other committees or members help with the committee's tasks?
- How will you share information with committee members?

① Consider using online tools to share documents and work collaboratively. This allows members to contribute their ideas easily and when it's convenient.

Developing your committee

Your committee members might face conflict when working with each other. Help prepare them for these conflicts by explaining what happens in each stage of committee development.

Stage 1: Assemble

Members learn about each other and the responsibilities of the committee and discuss their goals. This stage usually brings little conflict.

Stage 2: Plan

Members discuss ideas for reaching their goals. Disagreements can arise because of differences in approach or work style, and conflicts can occur.

These steps can be useful at this stage:

- Establishing rules for communicating
- Encouraging everyone to participate in discussions
- Meeting with members individually to address any concerns
- Reviewing standards set by the team
- Focusing on the issue rather than the people involved if disagreements occur

Stage 3: Adapt

You'll know you're at this stage when members begin to feel comfortable with each other's work habits and values. Responsibilities and roles are much more clearly defined, expectations are set, and collaboration is going smoothly.

Stage 4: Achieve

Members have established a comfortable working relationship and clear, stable processes, and the team is focused on problem-solving and meeting goals. Conflict may still occur, but members work together constructively.

Stage 5: Adjour

When the team completes a project or meets a goal, you've reached the final stage, adjourn. Consider having the members meet again to review and evaluate their experiences.

① Adapted from Bruce W. Tuckman's "Developmental sequence in small groups," 1965.

Setting goals

Create a plan to help your committee anticipate challenges, measure progress, and visualize goals.

You'll need an action plan for achieving your committee's goals. Work with your committee members first to set your goals for the year and then to develop the plan for achieving them.

Set your goals for the year

Make sure your annual goals support your strategic plan and Rotary's Action Plan. Goals should also be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Here are some tips for setting goals:

- Set a number of goals that are achievable, based on the size of your committee.
- Try to anticipate challenges and plan how your committee could overcome them.
- Make a list of the resources you already have and the resources you still need to get.
- Regularly assess your progress and, if necessary, adjust your goals.
- See if you can expand or build on any goals you've already achieved.

Develop an action plan

An action plan is a series of steps that can be taken to achieve each goal. For every step:

- Determine who's responsible for completing the step.
- Set a date for when the step should be completed.
- Decide how you'll measure progress and define success.

Which of these is an example of a good goal?

- A) Recruit five new members by 30 June
- B) Raise \$10,000
- C) Expand our membership

Answer:

A

Motivating members

Remember, committee members are volunteers. Part of your role is to keep them motivated and focused on reaching their goals.

Every successful committee is made up of volunteers who are committed to setting and achieving goals. How can you create an environment that will help keep all of them involved and enthusiastic?

Boost members' motivation by:

- Asking them for their ideas and being open to using them
- Creating opportunities for fellowship and networking
- Giving members assignments that make use of their expertise
- Inviting them to report on their work
- Recognizing their time and effort
- Explaining how their work benefits members in your club or district
- Making sure that the committee's goals are achievable

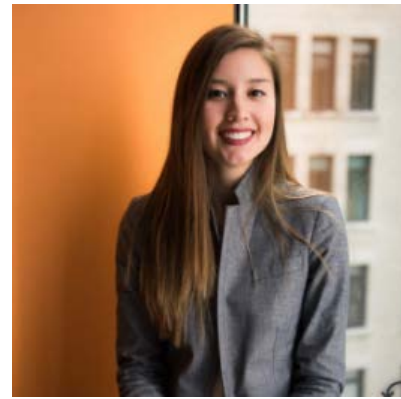
Scenario

You're the new chair of your committee. You meet with the other members and ask them about their committee experience.



I have a full-time job and family obligations. I'm worried that I might not have enough time to do all the projects we have planned.

I hope we approach our project planning differently this year. Last year, we set too many goals that we couldn't accomplish.



I really love serving on this committee. I just wish we could do some team-building activities that we'd all enjoy.

After hearing their concerns of not enough time, too many goals, and not enough team-building, you want to take the appropriate actions. Decide if the actions are relevant or not relevant to addressing their concerns.

	A) relevant	B) Not relevant
1) Encourage camaraderie by planning activities that all can enjoy		
2) Prioritize goals by importance and urgency		
3) Remind them how important your committee is to members of the club or district		
4) Conduct monthly check-ins to check on their progress		
5) Have members choose tasks that will fit in their schedule		
6) Assign members to projects and activities they have prior knowledge of		

Answers:

1 – (A), 2 – (A), 3 – (b), 4 – (b), 5 – (A), 6 – (b)

All of these actions will help members feel that their tasks are achievable, that the committee's goals are realistic, and that they are part of a real team.

Planning productive meetings

Structure your meetings to promote open discussion and an exchange of ideas.

Committee members feel more engaged and more willing to contribute when you consistently foster an environment that promotes open discussion. See how you can plan productive meetings.



① Plan a clear agenda

When preparing the meeting agenda:

- List your meeting objectives
- Ask for ideas from members
- Prioritize items to address

② Develop a meeting schedule

To prevent your meetings from lasting too long:

- Set a meeting time limit
- Reserve time for discussion of the most important agenda items
- Plan to discuss some items if time is short

③ Provide materials in advance

Send materials before the meeting to allow for a productive discussion at the meeting. That way, members can:

- Prepare questions about agenda items
- Think of creative solutions or ideas
- Bring relevant information to the meeting

④ Ask someone to take the notes

Notes should be typed during or soon after the meeting.

To encourage members to keep communicating and thinking of ideas, ask them to review the notes.

Delegating tasks

Sharing day-to-day responsibilities with other committee members leaves you time to assess the committee's progress and its members' growth.

Learn how to delegate tasks effectively.



Include context, instructions, and a due date

Make sure committee members have all the information they need to complete the task on time. Check their progress periodically so you can address any concerns about their work early on.

Use your members' talents and expertise

Assign tasks to those who are best equipped to do them and who have enough time to do them. If necessary, recruit others who have the skills to help.



Support committee members in learning new skills

Learn which of your committee members want to develop new skills. When you delegate a task that requires experience, pair a committee member who's highly skilled with one who is just starting to learn those skills.



Cultivating leaders

Leadership roles offer opportunities for growth and development.

You can help develop the next leader of your committee and prepare committee members for other leadership roles. Cultivate their talents and abilities by:

- Assigning tasks that prepare members for greater responsibility
- Empowering them to make decisions and take ownership of projects
- Asking members who have different skill sets to work together so they can learn from each other

Create a succession plan for your committee by identifying members who have a clear understanding of the committee's activities and are suited to leadership. Recommend possible chairs to district or club leaders when they're considering appointments.

What's next?

Now that you've completed the lessons about how to lead effective committees, you're ready to apply what you've learned.