

Meeting timings (of agenda items)

Consider the time required for the various items

- Keep the timings realistic - usually things take longer than you think.

Ask delegates to produce papers to go out with the agenda rather than deliver long, rambling verbal reports.

Plan breaks into long meetings.

- People's concentration begins to drop after just 45 minutes.
- Breaks don't all need to be 20 minutes for coffee. Five minutes in every 45 minutes for a quick leg-stretch will help keep people attentive.

Plan and time your agenda

- not essential, but it is usually helpful, to put precise times for each item
- essential for **you** to have thought about and planned the agenda

In other words, if the delegates don't have precise timings on their agendas - make sure you have them on yours. This is one of the biggest responsibilities of the person running the meeting, and is a common failing, so plan and manage this aspect firmly. People will generally expect you to control the timekeeping, and will usually respect a decision to close a discussion for the purpose of good timekeeping, even if the discussion is still in full flow.

Remember your delegates are volunteers and they are giving up their own time, which is valuable to them. It will be a lot easier for them to motivate themselves to attend a well run and energetic meeting, than one which meanders and takes much longer than necessary.

Don't confuse well run and businesslike with unfriendly. In fact, you are more likely to have a happier time if your meetings are well controlled and purposeful.