

COMMITTEE FORMATION

Description

1. PURPOSE: Doing consensus in a large group requires reserving the full-group time for things that really require the whole group's attention. Smaller items should be delegated to individuals and committees. The purpose of a committee is to do the work of the group more efficiently than the whole. The committee acts as an arm of the group.
2. Publicizing information from the committee helps increase trust from the group:
 - meeting times and locations, if others are welcome to participate
 - reports back to the larger group
 - minutes posted or available
3. Standing vs. Ad Hoc
 - Standing committees do ongoing work of the group (e.g. finance, membership)
 - Ad hoc committees are temporary to accomplish a task (e.g. building design)

Requirements

1. Clear mandate

Is the expectation for the committee to do research only, to make recommendations, to make decisions, or to carry out specific work? On big items, the whole group will likely need to participate more in order to get enrolled and contribute their ideas.
2. Timeline

Composition

1. Numbers: 3-5 people is usually most functional. More than 5 people may need a committee facilitator.
2. Traditionally the first person named is the *convenor*, who gathers group together for first meeting. Be thoughtful about who this is.
3. Find a balance among:
 - initiators & maintainers
 - range of breadth of opinions and views
 - writing skill
 - interpersonal and communication skills
 - linear & gestalt thinkers
 - information/knowledge & implementors
4. Joining a committee can happen by people volunteering or by appointments from the group, which is best probably depends on the situation. You also can invite potential or actual committee members to self-analyze as to their strengths and weaknesses.