

Do's and Don'ts of a Good Chair

Don't

- Talk too much as the chair
- Cover too much
- Run over time – keep things crisp and to the point
- Assume everyone has the same knowledge or knows what you are talking about
- Avoid -
 - taking sides
 - becoming a participant of the discussion
 - manipulating the group towards your own agenda
 - criticising the values and ideas of others
 - forcing your own ideas on the group - if necessary have someone else chair the meeting so you can take part
 - making decisions without asking for agreement
 - saying too much

Do

- Get organised in advance
- Have a written agenda
- Introduce yourself - maybe new members or others observing don't know who you are
- Make everyone feel comfortable
- Have a method to get member's ideas - brainstorming, open debate
- Have expectations about how members should give input
- Enjoy yourself
- Discussion - let member know when discussion has drifted from the topic. Usually it will quickly return to it. Remind members of the topic and the goals of the meeting

- Summarise- what less active members have said and link associated points together. Accept parts of ideas and ask for them to be developed.
- Spot likely problems - summarise feelings as well as content to anticipate problems
- State the problem - never blame anyone, state in a constructive manner. Clear up what decisions the group has to make, do not waste time on other things
- Start - as close to the start time as possible, people's time is valuable
- Finish - on time, if not before, again, people's time is valuable
- Watch how other chairs carry out their role