TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

Before the meeting

* Keep a working agenda between meetings to which you add important topics for the next meeting
* Send team members an agenda at least 5 days in advance. Include all related documents that will be reviewed in the agenda. E.g. financial statements, proposals, schedules, goals, reports, etc. Send this as one packet for easy retrieval. This enables the members of the leadership team to prepare properly so that they can contribute effectively. (This empowers the members of your leadership team to add value to the mission of the church to feel significant in their contributions.) This also prevents leadership teams being confronted with new information at the meeting where they are expected to decide upon that issue. (You should never put your leadership team in that position. It dishonors them as leaders and underutilizes the spiritual gifts God has given your team.)
* Include the following in the agenda:
  + Vision / Huddle / Skills – You can think about “VHS”-ing your meeting
  + Time at the beginning to check in with each other. This is the time to build and equip the team and establish understanding, trust and respect for one another. (Huddle)
  + Read scripture that will give backdrop to an important agenda item or that pertains to your church’s vision. Model leading devotions and then consider sharing the responsibility with other team members. (Vision & Skills)
  + Pray for each other (informed by the early check-in time) and for wisdom and spiritual discernment. Introduce a variety of prayer methods. Avoid ruts. (Huddle)
  + Approve minutes of the last meeting. This assumes that you have someone appointed to record minutes. Are there any updates or follow-ups to report from the minutes? Review the minutes when constructing the agenda in order to include items that need to be carried forward from the previous meeting for further action. An “Action Items” heading on the agenda might help foster accountability on the team and help keep the team engaged and you to be mindful of good delegation.
  + Include reports at the beginning of the meeting that will be necessary information for discussion later in the meeting. E.g. the financial report
  + Put the most important items that will require the most energy and need timely resolution early in the agenda.
  + Include an inspiring story; something to celebrate as a team. This goes to the point of you as a leader can build or change culture. We build/change culture through: 1) the stories we tell, 2) the behaviors we reward, and 3) the behaviors we correct.
  + Include something important for the team to wrestle with. They need to leave sensing that their voice counted and they decided something significant – not just because you’re trying to make your leadership team feel good, but because you fundamentally believe that teams – when led well – make better decisions than individuals. This has been proven true in many organizational leadership studies.
  + Attempt to keep a regularly scheduled meeting to 90 minutes or a max of 2 hours. Be alert to spending too much time in one area and to forcing a decision where the team is not ready to move.
  + Place estimated times next to each item on the agenda to help pace the meeting.
  + Confirm the next meeting time and place. Try to keep this consistent. E.g. the 2nd Tuesday of each month.
  + Conclude with prayer.
* Avoid canceling meetings, especially last minute. If you don’t treat these gatherings seriously, neither will your team members.

During the meeting

* Frequently thank team members for their participation and the value they add to the ministry. Let them know that what they are doing is a critical contribution. And don’t just say this; believe it. It’s true.
* Assume and expect members to have read the agenda and documents in advance.
* Withhold your opinions as much as possible so that the voices of the team can be heard first.
* Occasionally summarize the discussion and encourage quieter members to speak their thoughts.
* When at an impasse on a topic, pause for listening prayer. You may even dismiss the team for a few minutes to listen independently and return to share what they have heard.
* If you are still unclear, consider tabling until the next meeting and assigning an individual or sub-team to gather missing information.
* Keep the team focused on the topic at hand. Refocus as necessary.

After the meeting

* If someone is absent, immediately inform them of the time and place of the next meeting.
* Send minutes as soon as possible, with assignments highlighted.
* At least one week before sending out the next agenda, remind team members with assignments that they will be reporting their progress at the upcoming meeting.