

# A User's Guide to Effective Committees

ADDING VALUE TOGETHER



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**AUTHOR:** DR. ROBERT NORTON

**EDITOR:** DR. CATHERINE NORTON

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### **SUMMARY**

# Introduction

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## USING THIS GUIDE

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Committees involve many people and a lot of time. Effective committees help people feel better about their jobs and themselves. They improve work conditions, increase productivity and profit, and enhance quality. Ineffective committees frustrate people. They waste time, accomplish little, and make people feel helpless.

This guide tells how to get the most out of your committee. Refer to this guide often. Encourage other committee members to use these guidelines.

The term "committee" is intended to cover a broad range of small groups including working parties, staff groups, project teams and Board of Directors.

Regardless of the purpose of your group, or what you call your group, these principles apply.

## 6 PARTS

The guide consists of 6 parts. Part 1 discusses the role of the committee. It identifies what a committee is, how it operates, and what helps or hinders it.

Part 2 introduces the factors of success needed to structure a committee. Part 3 focuses on the meeting which is the most important tool of the committee. It identifies what makes meetings work effectively, and what prevents an effective meeting.


Part 4 discusses groundrules for meetings. Part 5 introduces the general rules of debate needed for formal processes. Part 6 points to the essential and desirable traits of effective leadership.

## READING THE GUIDE

This guide highlights special points in 4 ways: warnings, tips, summary lists, and definitions.

### Warnings

The guide periodically provides warnings, highlighted by the image of a bomb about to go off in a warning box. A typical WARNING box looks like the following:

<p><b>WARNING!</b></p> 	<p>don't start the consultative process without setting expectations</p> <p>make sure senior management supports the consultative process</p>
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The warning tells you where and when to expect trouble, frustration, and stress in the consultative process.

## TIPS

The guide periodically provides TIPS on how to make a process work better. A typical TIPS box looks like the following:

TIPS	throw a piece of candy at anyone who breaks a groundrule.  fine members for being late (keep a kitty; buy a casket ticket, etc.).
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## Summary Points

A vertical line and bullets set aside summary points throughout the guide. A typical set of summary points looks like the following:

- ◆ Find advice quickly
- ◆ Summarize characteristics
- ◆ Identify traits.

## Definitions

Definitions appear throughout the guide to help clarify meaning. A definition is highlighted in the following way:

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**definition:** n. 1. An outline of responsibilities, 2. A set of guidelines to accomplish an objective.

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The definitions contain common meanings and interpretation.