

How to Use Martha's Rules

Preparation

Choose facilitator and they should prepare an agenda before meeting so everyone knows what will be covered. Facilitator and participants should know the topics ahead of time.

Generating Proposals

This step is if a member raises an issue, but a specific proposal has not been presented to the group. The participants should listen carefully to avoid endless repetition in the conversation.

Making Proposals Concrete

The facilitator should try to bring together the ideas into one or more proposals. They should answer questions such as:

- How much money do we want to spend?
- To whom do we want to give the authority to make that decision?
- What are the different goals underlying each suggestion?

Take "Sense" Vote

The point of this vote is to discover how the group feels about a proposal. The facilitator states the proposal then takes a hand count on the following:

- Who likes the proposal? (**vote with thumbs up**)
- Who can live with the proposal? (**vote with sideways thumb**)
- Who is uncomfortable with the proposal? (**vote with thumb down**)

Take "Vote" Vote

The point of this vote is to find out what those who are uncomfortable are uncomfortable about. The facilitator may allow questions and answers but should diffuse unproductive dialogues.

** Interpreting the votes:*

If a yes vote has a numerical majority, the proposal has been adopted. If a no vote has numerical majority, the decision is postponed. There are several options in this case:

- 1. Generate a new proposal.*
- 2. Continue discussing the issues until everyone is comfortable.*
- 3. Accept that the issue cannot be decided at this time and bring it up later.*

Implementation and Review

The facilitator should state the adopted proposal and make sure that everyone agrees to it. It should be made clear what will be done, who will do it, what criteria will be used to judge when the job is done, and whether and when the decision should be reviewed.