



Chairing a Session

Some Basic Tips

Anticipate – anticipate – anticipate! The best plans can go astray so anticipating and staying on top of the management of your day is key to a successful session.

Remember to:

- Arrive early enough to ensure the physical set-up of the room is conducive for a productive session and morning refreshments are ready when participants arrive
- Start the day and finish on time
- Inform the group about housekeeping, lunch arrangements, and any special instructions
- For tours, be sure the group has the directions to the tour location and assist in organizing carpooling. (If using a bus, contact the driver to assist with directions.) Be ready to provide entrance and organizational procedures on the spot, if necessary
- Keep the group on target and focused on the agenda/tasks/timeline for the day
- Be sure the group understands what is expected of them after the session is over, if there are clean-up tasks and any follow-up activities

Opening the Session

- Welcome the group; introduce yourself and share something about your experience in the leadership program
- Review the session agenda and give any housekeeping information

Introducing Speakers

- Give a brief introduction. Include the speaker's name and title, the subject of the presentation and why it is of interest. If a tour is involved, briefly explain about the business or facility to give everyone an idea of what they can expect to see.
- Review the time limits. Arrange with the speaker how you will signal when the time is almost up and cut them off when it is time for the question period to start. Make sure you clarify with the speaker and participants about the amount of time set aside for questions.
- Signal the time limit by moving to the front to end the presentation or next to the speaker of the tour.
- Invite the group to ask for questions. Think of a question you can ask to begin the discussion in case no one else is ready with the first question.
- Watch the time. Announce the last question a few minutes before the presentation/tour is due to end.
- Thank the speaker warmly and sincerely, mentioning their name. Say why this presentation has been particularly interesting, stimulating, informative, relevant, or timely for this audience.
- Lead the applause. Shake the speaker's hand.
- Give new direction. What's happening next?

Closing the Session

- Acknowledge all donations and sponsors for the day; thank any guests or speakers
- Invite participants to social and provide directions to location
- Following the session, prepare and send thank you notes (An option is to prepare thank you notes during the day and present when thanking speakers.)