



COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

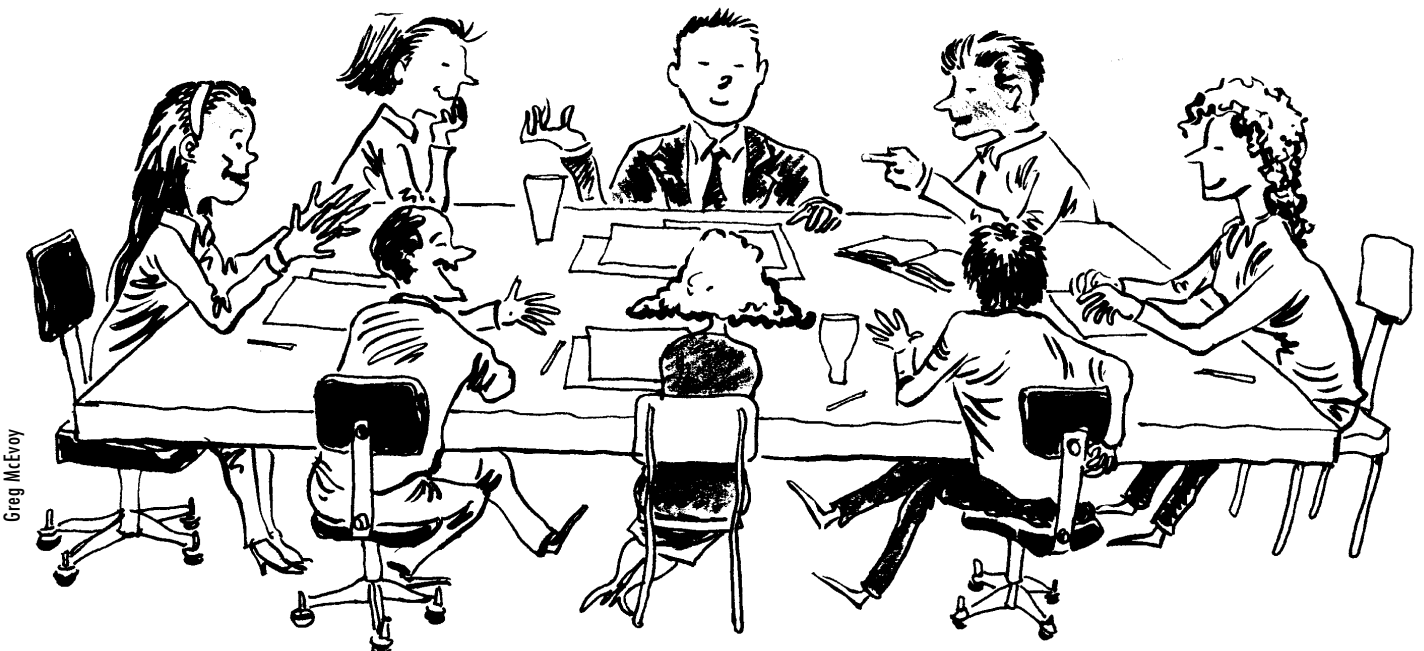
**PROJECT PLANNER**

---

# Marvellous Meetings:

## Staging Efficient & Low Waste Meetings

---



## PROJECT PLANNER

# Marvellous Meetings: Staging Efficient & Low Waste Meetings

This booklet provides meeting tips for all your project planning and decision-making meetings.

### Low Waste Meetings

Meetings themselves can be huge waste-producing events.

To help you keep your meetings' waste generation in check, we've included a booklet called *A Guide to Low Waste Meetings, Conventions and Conferences* (published by the Toronto Recycling Action Committee, Information and Communication Division, Department of the City Clerk, City of Toronto).

This is your guide to cutting down the amount of material that's thrown away during and after different types of gatherings. It features a waste minimization checklist and steps to help you apply the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) to your meetings.



### About Us

Earth Day Canada facilitates positive environmental action.

Earth Day Canada is a national environmental charitable organization that provides youth and community organizations, schools, businesses, government departments, and individual Canadians with an opportunity to make a positive difference where they live, work, and spend their leisure hours. Our national network includes thousands of community organizers in every sector — all working for positive change.

Operating year-round, Earth Day Canada's mission is to improve the state of the environment by motivating and helping individual Canadians just like you to take positive environmental action. We offer interactive programs, a free community Earth Day/Earth Week public Events Calendar (available in March and April), and information and tools you'll use again and again.

Earth Day Canada is the national organizer of Canada's celebration in Earth Day/Earth Week. April 22 is International Earth Day — the largest environmental event in the world. Every Earth Day, millions of Canadians join people in about 100 countries in positive environmental action. This popular event has grown into Earth Week in Canada to accommodate the scores of events that take place across the country.

CHARITABLE # 131951378RR

### Marvellous Meetings: Staging Efficient & Low Waste Meetings

Copyright © 1996 Earth Day Canada

All rights reserved. For permission to reproduce sections of this booklet, please contact:

Earth Day Canada  
144 Front Street West, Suite 250  
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2L7  
Tel: 416/599-1991  
Fax: 416/599-3100

**Editor-in-chief:** Debra Fernandes,  
Communications Director, Community Action  
Network Manager

**Contributing writers:**  
Karen Hortopan, EcoKids Manager  
Mary Li, Communications Consultant

**Copy editors:**  
Naomi Herberg, Communications Consultant  
Finn Martin, Communications Consultant

**Designer:** Ilona Staples

**Illustrators:** Bruce Scott, Greg McEvoy

# 5 Steps to Conducting Project Meetings that Produce Results

<b>INSIDE:</b>	<b>Page #</b>
<b>1. Planning to Meet</b> .....	3
a) Why meet? .....	3
b) What’s an effective meeting?.....	3
c) When should you meet? .....	3
<b>2. Preparing to Meet</b> .....	4
a) What to consider when preparing your agenda .....	4
b) Create an agenda that communicates your meeting’s goals .....	5
<b>3. Conducting a First Meeting to Get the Ball Rolling</b> .....	6
a) Introduce participants .....	6
b) Pick a chairperson .....	6
c) Create meeting guidelines .....	6
<b>4. Running with the Project</b> .....	7
a) Brainstorming meetings .....	7
b) Planning meetings.....	7
<b>5. Following Up with the Meeting</b> .....	7

## STEP 1. Planning to Meet

### a) Why meet?

Your project planning committee needs to meet to plan, implement, and promote your project. Here are just some of the reasons to meet:

- build a project planning committee
- define your committee’s goals
- decide on environmental solutions
- plan your Earth Day/Earth Week celebrations
- plan a project and chart an action plan
- create a budget
- define roles and assign responsibilities
- empower project organizers and participants to achieve results
- problem-solve
- make decisions
- evaluate progress
- revise your action plan, if necessary
- train volunteers

### b) What’s an effective meeting?

An effective meeting is your best tool to achieving your environmental goals. A good meeting uses everyone’s time wisely and empowers participants to take action and to work together to produce results. It builds rapport among committee members so you work better as a team.

### c) When should you meet?

The planning committee can meet with other members or (if you have them) other committees (such as a promotions committee) to check progress, assess plans, and problem-solve.

How often you meet will depend on the size of your project or event. Hold weekly meetings closer to your project or event date to confirm plans and to review progress. If members can’t attend some meetings, the project coordinator can hold a telephone meeting, meet members individually, or have members send a progress report by e-mail or by fax.

---

## STEP 2: Preparing to Meet

You've decided you want to hold a meeting; you've invited the project planning committee members; you know the general purpose of why you are meeting. Now what? You need to prepare for the meeting. You want to set a tone and a pace that will get the group moving so that your project plan becomes a reality.

Good preparation is especially important if this is the first time your planning committee will meet. To do this, keep your audience and their needs in mind; they need to know what to expect when they meet.

Do you want participants to prepare for the meeting? Then send handouts with your agenda a few days before the meeting.

---

### a) What to consider when preparing your agenda:

#### 1. content of meeting

- type of meeting: to plan your Earth Week celebrations, brainstorm, problem-solve, make a decision, etc.
- needs of participants (basic or detailed background information)
- type of information to be presented
- names of presenters

#### 2. date and time to meet

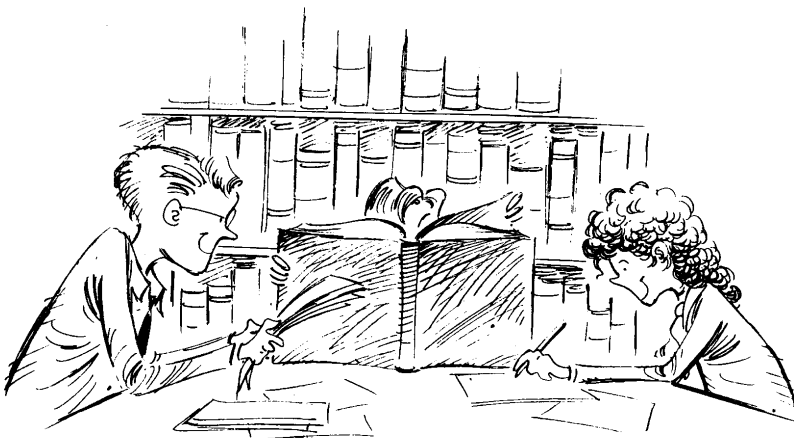
- a day and time that's most convenient for participants

#### 3. location

Choose a site that's comfortable for participants.

- Is the location convenient for participants? Pick central locations.
- Is the location accessible by public transportation?
- Are there enough chairs and tables?
- Is the area quiet (away from distracting noise)?
- Are electrical outlets and audiovisual equipment available?
- Is a microphone system needed to enable everyone to hear the speaker?
- Are there washrooms nearby?
- If food is to be served, are reusable dishes an option? What are the catering options?
- Is there adequate space for you to store and serve refreshments?
- Is there adequate space for you to display information?
- Is there wheelchair access?

Greg McEvoy



**b) Create an agenda that communicates your meeting's goals**

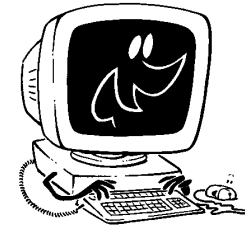
Once you've identified the goals and content of the meeting and established its date, time, and location, start creating your agenda.

*Create an agenda* for an informal, relaxed meeting.

This type of meeting is more conducive to brainstorming and problem-solving sessions.

Standard agendas communicate the *what, when, where, why, how, and who* of your meeting:

- the meeting's date, location, and time
- the meeting's objectives (to recruit more members, assign tasks, problem-solve, work out a budget, chart an action plan, etc.)
- the discussion topic, the time schedule, and the presenter's name



Bruce Scott

- a list of informative handouts, such as news coverage or a report on environmental challenges and action tips (Include to give participants the full picture so they understand the importance of positive environmental action. Refer to the resources in your CAN kit for environmental information.)
- RSVP contact name and telephone number

*Earth Day/Earth Week  
Planning Committee*



Bruce Scott

---

## STEP 3: Conducting a first meeting to get the ball rolling

### About team building

If this is your committee's first meeting, this is your opportunity to build a successful team. Productive project meetings involve participants who share the same environmental goals, are clear on their roles, and value each other's contribution. Encourage people to be positive and enthusiastic.

During your first meeting, introduce participants, pick a chairperson, and develop basic guidelines to ensure efficient and democratic meetings. Make sure to schedule enough time for each item.

---

### a) Introduce participants

Allow participants to get to know each other. Individuals can introduce themselves, and briefly talk about their environmental interests, goals, why they want to help organize an environmental pro-

ject, and their professional skills. Give everyone an opportunity to interact and share stories.

If your committee is large, have members use name cards or tags for the first few meetings.

---

### b) Pick a chairperson

The chairperson should be either the project coordinator or someone who will work closely with the project coordinator. To be effective, your chairperson should have strong leadership skills, strong verbal and written communication skills, and good interpersonal skills.

#### *Standard role of a meeting chairperson:*

1. ensures meetings begin and end on time, and keeps meetings on course
2. appoints a minute taker
3. delegates project tasks

4. resolves conflicts (if members don't agree on an environmental issue to address, if people get emotional, etc.)

5. ensures democratic discussion and decision-making (everyone should have an opportunity to contribute)

6. empowers participants by recognizing and rewarding their contributions

Make sure your chairperson is a willing and an enthusiastic volunteer, preferably with demonstrated experience and enthusiasm.

---

### c) Create meeting guidelines

Include strategies to:

- keep participants on topic, make sure topics are presented in the scheduled order, deal with interruptions, late arrivals, etc.
- ensure a democratic discussion and decision-making format

- handle disagreements and conflicts
- ensure effective task delegation and follow-up
- handle post meeting reporting: production and distribution of minutes, etc.

## STEP 4: Running with the Project

### a) Brainstorming meetings

Once your planning committee has met, picked a chairperson, and charted meeting guidelines, choose an environmental project and run with it.

Your team now needs to share ideas to work out the details of the project.

To prepare for the second meeting, include in your agenda:

- what the environmental challenge is
- background/historical information on the challenge
- facts on the environmental challenge and its solutions, and examples of past successes of similar projects (Contact Earth Day Canada for success stories.)

Once the committee has chosen an environmental challenge to address and members are familiar with the background information, your team needs to arrive at a consensus as to which solution to adopt.

1. Brainstorm together to come up with projects and events that will lead to a solution. (Review the Idea Pack chapter in your CAN manual for some project suggestions.) Give everyone an opportunity to express their views. Large groups can form smaller groups to allow for in-depth group discussions, and then present their views to the entire committee.
2. During this wider exchange of ideas, the chairperson should ask questions and summarize main points.
3. Participants should assess the benefits and disadvantages of each project against the amount of effort, time, and money required.
4. The chairperson should review the group's suggestions and the best options.
5. As a group, agree on a strategy to carry out the plan. Assess the environmental impact of each project task.

### b) Planning meetings

(Refer to your CAN manual and Project Planners for project planning tips.)

1. Plan projects and chart an action plan.
2. Work out tasks that the committee and additional volunteers are responsible for.
3. Record who agrees to do what.
4. Agree to share information.
5. Reach decisions.

## STEP 5: Following Up with the Meeting

Have the designated minute taker write the minutes, and assign someone to distribute them to the committee members.

Evaluate your meeting's success by comparing your expectations with what actually happened.

- Did the meeting successfully empower participants to produce results?
- Were decisions arrived at democratically?

#### Outline for minutes

- date
  - meeting's objective
  - who attended the meeting
  - brief summary of the meeting
  - topics discussed and related follow-up action
- |            |              |            |
|------------|--------------|------------|
| Item _____ | Action _____ | Date _____ |
|------------|--------------|------------|

- What can you improve upon?
- What worked?
- What didn't?
- Were you effective in reducing waste?

# Notes