

**Chapter 1 : Problems associated with group work - Student Services - The University of Queensland, Austr**

*A meeting agenda is the list of items that participants hope to accomplish at a meeting. The agenda should be distributed to participants several days in advance of a meeting, minimally 24 hours in advance so that participants have the opportunity to prepare for the meeting.*

But there is power in numbers, and political institutions are more likely to respond to a collective rather than to an individual voice. An interest group is an organization whose members share common concerns and try to influence government policies affecting those concerns. Interest groups are also known as lobbies; lobbying is one of the ways in which interest groups shape legislation and bring the views of their constituents to the attention of decision-makers. Elected officials as well as the public are often critical of the roles of "special interests" in the political process. The activities of lobbyists can smack of vote-buying and influence-peddling. There are so many organized lobbies today, representing numerous segments of society and addressing such a wide range of issues, that the distinction between "special interests" and those of the American people may no longer be valid. In a sense, interest groups are the American people. There are 23, entries in the Encyclopedia of Associations, and a high percentage of them qualify as interest groups. Many have their national headquarters in Washington, D. Interest groups can be grouped into several broad categories. Economic interest groups Certainly the largest category, economic interest groups include organizations that represent big business, such as the U. Large corporations and individual unions also have offices in the capital. Trade associations represent entire industries. The members of the American Public Power Association APPA , for example, are municipally owned electric utilities, rural electric cooperatives, and state power authorities. Professionals also form interest groups. Public interest groups Public interest groups do not usually expect to profit directly from the policy changes they seek. However, the activists who staff these groups gain financially by attracting donations from individuals and foundations who support their activities. As the name implies, public interest groups enjoy an image of non-partisanship, even though some of them engage in clearly political activities such as when Common Cause joined the fight against President George W. These groups also usually receive disproportionately positive news coverage, even when there is serious disagreement over their policy proposals. A large number of consumer advocacy groups and environmental organizations, such as the Environmental Defense Fund EDF , fall into this category. Perhaps best known is the League of Women Voters, which promotes simplified voting procedures and an informed electorate, and Common Cause, which backs more effective government. Common Cause is a strong critic of other interest groups for their excessive campaign contributions, and it lobbies for campaign finance reform. Government interest groups Given the structure of our federal system, it is not surprising that there are organizations to bring the issues of local and state government before Congress and the administration. One critical task performed by these groups is to help state and local governments get federal grants. These funds are important because they are a central means in which states get back money taken away through federal taxes. As the budget has tightened and as more Republicans have won governorships, these groups have become more likely to seek more local control over policies instead of more cash. Religious interest groups The separation of church and state does not preclude religious interest groups from lobbying; indeed, it is safe to say that all religious groups are involved in politics to some degree. The Christian Coalition, which draws most of its support from conservative Protestants, has an agenda that includes support for school prayer, opposition to homosexual rights, and a constitutional amendment banning abortion. It became an important factor in American politics, particularly in the Republican party, in the early s. Their concerns involve more than civil rights, however, and encompass social welfare, immigration policy, affirmative action, a variety of gender issues, and political action. Ideological interest groups Ideological interest groups view all issues " federal spending, taxes, foreign affairs, court appointments, and so forth " through the lens of their political ideology, typically liberal or conservative. Their support for legislation or policy depends exclusively on whether they find it ideologically sound. Single-issue interest groups Some interest groups are formed to advocate for or against a single issue. These examples are not meant to suggest that single-issue interest

groups always generate their opposite. Mothers Against Drunk Driving MADD , which campaigns for stiffer sentences for driving while intoxicated and mandatory penalties for the first offense, clearly does not. Although most interest groups focus on domestic issues, some are concerned with foreign policy.

**Chapter 2 : Revenue Recognition Transition Resource Group - Implementation Issues Memos**

*The three models we focus on in this issue—“framing, agenda setting, and priming”—have received significant scholarly attention since they were introduced. Agenda setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the.*

Among the myriad ways that issues got on the policy agenda, coincidence is one of the most interesting. You can bet that the city of Jacksonville Beach had a set of summer priorities lined up that they hoped to marshal scarce staff resources and address. This refers to chance. Note, too, that chance can be taken advantage of. Part of a surf group that wants more, paid lifeguards on the beach? After a shark attack, spring in to action, do a press release, get together a group to protest at City Hall, get a celebrity to bemoan the sorry state of affairs, etc. One can be even more proactive than this, creating your own focusing event. Again, just as in advertising, sex and violence sells. Violence can be iffy, as only your very, very hard core supporters like smashed windows anti-globalization fanatics , burnt churches religious fanatics , assassinated doctors anti-abortion fanatics , or bombed buildings anti-war fanatics. This process was described by Elsbach and Sutton The events were legitimate for the authors in that "Each event involved one or more illegitimate actions that were attributed to organizational members, and each violated widely held social norms about how organizations and their members ought to behave" p. The process involves first denying formal organizational involvement in these acts despite having encouraged them and for some groups that employ this strategy, despite having been involved in planning and authorizing them. The organization can win in two ways: There are some obvious ethical problems here: To who do the leaders of the organization account? Normative concerns certainly apply, in that Elsbach and Sutton frame their argument around two left-wing organizations that, presumably, the authors favour. Yet elements of the the White Supremacist movement have adopted similar tactics: These ethical conundrums are, for me, one of the most important issues in the involvement of civic groups in public policy. As novelist Thomas Pynchon once put it: Regardless of how rigorous the methods employed, how deep the heart tempering these methods, and how righteous the ethical standards keeping it all on the straight and narrow, wholly venal political processes may have been in motion ensuring that policy analysts are only being called on to analyze an issue favouring a narrow special interest, while other, more pressing issues are not considered. This initiation includes a number of analytical steps, as well: The linkage between the individual and organizational recognition is crucial. Thus, we examine recognition of the problem as both an individual and an organizational phenomenon" p. Polling data, for instance, is probably the best indicator of this. The public agenda -- Gerston implicitly defines the public agenda as "a political barometer of the most sensitive problems which have reached the attention of policy makers for management and disposition" p. Cobb and Elder differentiate between the systemic and formal agendas, as: The shark attacks of last summer, for instance, bumped something else out of the news and so lessened the likelihood of that being taken up by the policy process. So the public agenda is those things the public is concerned about. The formal agenda -- those things policy makers are actually addressing. Getting something on the public agenda makes it more likely that an issue will be put on the formal agenda, or taken up by policy makers. Ronald Dahl is perhaps best known for his contribution to the understanding of community power. To simplify greatly, in *Who Governs?* A study of the conflict surrounding these issues would reveal to the researcher which party has exercised the greatest influence in carrying the issue, as well as the pattern of power within the community. Bachratz and Baratz challenged this view in an article titled "Two Faces of Power. This can be done indirectly, through limiting "decision making to relatively non-controversial matters, by influencing community values and political procedures and rituals" p. The symbolic agenda -- Gerston also discusses the symbolic agenda , p. The general idea here is that policy makers feel that they need to be seen doing something. These have no substance, are all symbolic. Scope, for Gerston, depends on the scale of the policy issue. A national policy issue would be expected to attract the attention of millions of people; a local issue would only need the attention of thousands. Gun control is an excellent example. For both the pro-gun control folks those who focus on the part of the Second Amendment to the Constitution that reads "A well regulated militia, being

necessary to the security of a free state. Again, as part of the "how-to" focus of his book, he notes that the policy advocate seeking to gauge intensity should observe the public. Opinion polling also can serve this purpose, as these often try to gauge intensity in various ways, especially by asking citizens to rank policy priorities. This is especially important in that even if policy makers respond to intense, widespread public interest in an issue, if this interest fades, by the time the lumbering policy process acts no one might care. He suggests that this lead to success on these issues making it onto the agenda: More costly problems will obviously generate more attention than less costly ones. More costly to fix problems will generate less attention. Why does the estate tax attract so much attention? This affects a very small fraction of Americans. Further, doing away with the estate tax would cost the public billions of dollars at a time when the federal budget is in deficit, with massive obligations coming over the next years. Repeal of the estate tax would benefit only a very small portion of the population. So why did this get pushed up the formal agenda? A handful of very influential rich people would benefit greatly. Neither the scope nor the intensity of the future Social Security budgetary shortfall are worse than the current Medicare budgetary shortfall. So why did this issue get pushed up the formal agenda? It has long been recognized that a lot of issues get put on the formal agenda from inside note: President Bush deciding to privatize Social Security, invade Iraq, and cut the estate tax. President Clinton deciding to intervene in Kosovo. Innumerable technical and other initiatives being started by public administrators on a day-to-day basis. Chance, or dumb luck! The mass murders of September 11, put innumerable issues on the public and formal agendas. Hurricane Katrina put levee safety on the agenda, as well as poverty, and others! The first step for him is research. This comes after "deciding what is important", but it is also worth keeping in mind that "systematic, comprehensive research" is a good way to figure out how important an issue is, and to identify allies. Gerston starts this section with a series of points that could be taken from my "systematic, comprehensive research" grading criterion: Government and community organizations, and personal interview -- networking! Keep an open mind! When faced with views contradicting your own: Be willing to admit mistakes and change your views, if you come across a compelling counter argument. If you find yourself unconvinced by other views, try to understand these other perspectives. Convincing others rarely results from shouting your views loudly. It can come from quietly addressing the views of others on their terms, and showing them where they are inconsistent or wrong. Considering what to do Direct democracy:

**Chapter 3 : AEC/WC How Problems Gain Importance and Become Contentious Issues through Agenda Setting**

*Types of Interest Groups But there is power in numbers, and political institutions are more likely to respond to a collective rather than to an individual voice. An interest group is an organization whose members share common concerns and try to influence government policies affecting those concerns.*

**Policy Development Process Steps**—Issues Framing, Agenda Setting, and Policy Formulation Once a problem requiring a policy solution has been identified, the process of policy development includes how the problem is framed by various stakeholders issues framing , which problems make it onto the policymaking agenda, and how the policy or law is formulated. Together, these steps, often not conducted in a linear fashion, determine whether a problem or policy proposal is acted on. Activities in policy development include advocacy and policy dialogue by stakeholders and data analysis to support each step of the process. Issue framing The way a problem is stated or an issue is framed influences the types of solutions that are proposed. Often, policy stakeholders take different sides of an issue, such as adolescent reproductive health or how to address the problem of teen pregnancy. Some policy stakeholders perceive that teen pregnancy should be addressed through abstinence-only education for young people, while others see the need for comprehensive sex and reproductive health education and access to means of protection against pregnancy and disease. Some might argue that teen pregnancy is not a problem or is a logical response to a given set of health and cultural conditions. Similarly, stakeholders have also taken various views on issues related to reducing maternal mortality. Debates have centered, for example, around the role traditional birth attendants can or cannot play in reducing maternal mortality and whether or not safe motherhood programs should focus primarily on providing emergency obstetric care or on wider components, such as antenatal care and nutrition Gay et al. For example, when ARV treatment was becoming more affordable, even in developing countries, some stakeholders contended that prevention should remain the primary programmatic response and that introducing ARVs on a wide scale would not be feasible. Now, as the ARV drugs become more available in developing countries, the role of prevention programs is under debate. Some stakeholders take the view that prevention should focus on reaching those who are already infected, while others consider that working with people not yet infected is still important. Likewise, the policy debate on reducing HIV among intravenous drug users continues. Some stakeholders promote harm reduction strategies, including needle exchange programs, while others favor cracking down on drug users to stop the illegal activity. Sometimes stakeholders take the same position on an issue, but for very different reasons. Issue framing often sets the terms for policy debate. Reich cites an example of how the framing of an issue can affect its chances of becoming policy. Similar approaches were adopted at the time in many Latin American countries, with financial support from the multilateral development banks. This perception of the proposed policy created a strong reluctance among both politicians and bureaucrats to support the reform—especially when opposition arose from the powerful medical association and from NGOs active in the health field Reich, Stakeholders outside of government can suggest issues to be addressed by policymakers, but government policymakers must become engaged in the process for a problem to be formally addressed through policy. The items which make it to the agenda pass through a competitive selection process, and not all problems will be addressed. Inevitably, some will be neglected, which means that some constituency will be denied. At any given time, policymakers are paying serious attention to relatively few of all possible issues or problems facing them as national or subnational policymakers. In decentralized systems, sometimes issues are placed on the agenda of various levels of government simultaneously to coordinate policymaking. Altman and Petkus But with clear issue framing and strong evidence to substantiate the problem, stakeholders have been able to set the critical issue on the policy agenda. Policy formulation Policy formulation is the part of the process by which proposed actions are articulated, debated, and drafted into language for a law or policy. Written policies and laws go through many drafts before they are final. Wording that is not acceptable to policymakers key to passing laws or policies is revised. For example, a policy in Jamaica to support providers to serve minors under the age of consent went through numerous drafts over a period of two years before it was passed in The final version of the policy

contained more references to promoting abstinence than did the first version. International conference declarations and programs of action also go through iterations during formulation. Policy formulation includes setting goals and outcomes of the policy or policies Isaacs and Irvin, ; Health Canada, The goals and objectives may be general or narrow but should articulate the relevant activities and indicators by which they will be achieved and measured. The goals of a policy could include, for example, the creation of greater employment opportunities, improved health status, or increased access to reproductive health services. Policy outcomes could include ensuring access to ARV treatment for HIV in the workplace or access to emergency obstetric care for pregnant women. Goals and outcomes can be assessed through a number of lenses, including gender and equity considerations. Activities Related to the Process—Advocacy, Policy Dialogue, and Data Analysis While issues framing, agenda setting, and policy formulation are stages that policies go through, each of these stages can include a number of activities, namely advocacy, policy dialogue, and analysis of evidence related to the problem and policy responses. Advocacy and policy dialogue. Preferably drawing on the participation by a range of stakeholders, advocacy and policy dialogue are used to convince policymakers to address a problem, debate various solutions, and decide on specific policy actions. Advocacy is more likely to succeed if networks of organizations and individuals join forces to address issues that require policy action and organize advocacy campaigns. Networking for Policy Change POLICY, , an advocacy training manual, provides details about the role of networks and advocacy in bringing about change. Stories from people and organizations involved in advocacy for HIV e. The media can also play an influential role in advocacy and policy dialogue by highlighting issues that need to be addressed or bringing public discourse to issues already on the agenda Altman and Petkus, The media often provides symbolic understandings of policy issues and also serve as gatekeepers, deciding which issues will receive public attention and which will not Porter, Both advocacy and policy dialogue are important for policy. In advocacy, stakeholders promote issues and their positions on the issues. Policy dialogue involves discussions among stakeholders to raise issues, share perspectives, find common ground, and to reach agreement or consensus, if possible, on policy solutions. Policy dialogue takes place among policymakers, advocates, other nongovernmental stakeholders, other politicians, and beneficiaries see VSI, , for a code of good practice on policy dialogue between the government and civil society. Data analysis Data analysis in the process component of the Policy Circle is more complex than in problem identification because policymakers weigh their decisions on a number of criteria. Data analysis expands from the technical aspects of an issue and focuses on the political costs and benefits of policy reform. Thomas and Grindle posit that policymakers tend to make their decisions based on a number of criteria, including: This website was made possible through support of the U.

**Chapter 4 : 20 Techniques to Improve Meeting Productivity: #5 Parking Lot - Ava S. Butler**

*This EDIS publication 1) discusses how a problem draws political attention through agenda setting and becomes a public issue, 2) discusses the role the media plays in agenda setting, and 3) provides a brief commentary on the influence of interest groups on public issues.*

Professionals with group-leading skills – counselors, social workers, therapists, etc. Teachers Health professionals and health educators Respected community members. These folks may be respected for their leadership – president of the Rotary Club, spokesperson for an environmental movement – for their positions in the community – bank president, clergyman – or simply for their personal qualities – integrity, fairness, ability to communicate with all sectors of the community. When might you lead a group discussion? At the start of something new. When an issue can no longer be ignored. When groups need to be brought together. One way to deal with racial or ethnic hostility, for instance, is to convene groups made up of representatives of all the factions involved. When an existing group is considering its next step or seeking to address an issue of importance to it. The staff of a community service organization, for instance, may want to plan its work for the next few months, or to work out how to deal with people with particular quirks or problems. How do you lead a group discussion? In the latter case, you may have the chance to choose a space and otherwise structure the situation. Set the stage If you have time to prepare beforehand, there are a number of things you may be able to do to make the participants more comfortable, and thus to make discussion easier. Usually, that means comfortable furniture that can be moved around so that, for instance, the group can form a circle, allowing everyone to see and hear everyone else easily. It may also mean a space away from the ordinary. The sound of water from the mill stream rushing by put everyone at ease, and encouraged creative thought. Provide food and drink The ultimate comfort, and one that breaks down barriers among people, is that of eating and drinking. Bring materials to help the discussion along Most discussions are aided by the use of newsprint and markers to record ideas, for example. Become familiar with the purpose and content of the discussion If you have the opportunity, learn as much as possible about the topic under discussion. This is not meant to make you the expert, but rather to allow you to ask good questions that will help the group generate ideas. Make sure everyone gets any necessary information, readings, or other material beforehand If participants are asked to read something, consider questions, complete a task, or otherwise prepare for the discussion, make sure that the assignment is attended to and used. Lead the discussion Think about leadership style The first thing you need to think about is leadership style, which we mentioned briefly earlier in the section. Are you a directive or non-directive leader? The chances are that, like most of us, you fall somewhere in between the extremes of the leader who sets the agenda and dominates the group completely, and the leader who essentially leads not at all. Facilitators are non-directive, and try to keep themselves out of the discussion, except to ask questions or make statements that advance it. For most group discussions, the facilitator role is probably a good ideal to strive for. Help the group establish ground rules The ground rules of a group discussion are the guidelines that help to keep the discussion on track, and prevent it from deteriorating into namecalling or simply argument. Some you might suggest, if the group has trouble coming up with the first one or two: Everyone should treat everyone else with respect: No arguments directed at people – only at ideas and opinions. Disagreement should be respectful – no ridicule. Try to keep your comments reasonably short and to the point, so that others have a chance to respond. Consider all comments seriously, and try to evaluate them fairly. Everyone is responsible for following and upholding the ground rules. Ground rules may also be a place to discuss recording the session. Who will take notes, record important points, questions for further discussion, areas of agreement or disagreement? Generate an agenda or goals for the session You might present an agenda for approval, and change it as the group requires, or you and the group can create one together. There may actually be no need for one, in that the goal may simply be to discuss an issue or idea. Lead the discussion How active you are might depend on your leadership style, but you definitely have some responsibilities here. They include setting, or helping the group to set the discussion topic; fostering the open process; involving all participants; asking questions or offering ideas to advance the discussion; summarizing

or clarifying important points, arguments, and ideas; and wrapping up the session. If the group is meeting to discuss a specific issue or to plan something, the discussion topic is already set. If the topic is unclear, then someone needs to help the group define it. The leader " through asking the right questions, defining the problem, and encouraging ideas from the group " can play that role. Fostering the open process. Nurturing the open process means paying attention to the process, content, and interpersonal dynamics of the discussion all at the same time " not a simple matter. Most of your actions as leader should be in the service of modeling or furthering the open process. The exceptions are opinions or ideas that are discriminatory or downright false. This is part of fostering the open process, but is important enough to deserve its own mention. Asking questions or offering ideas to advance the discussion. The leader should be aware of the progress of the discussion, and should be able to ask questions or provide information or arguments that stimulate thinking or take the discussion to the next step when necessary. This is especially true when the group is stuck, either because two opposing ideas or factions are at an impasse, or because no one is able or willing to say anything. Summarizing or clarifying important points, arguments, or ideas. This task entails making sure that everyone understands a point that was just made, or the two sides of an argument. The point is to make sure that everyone understands what the individual or group actually meant. Wrapping up the session. As the session ends, the leader should help the group review the discussion and make plans for next steps more discussion sessions, action, involving other people or groups, etc. He should also go over any assignments or tasks that were agreed to, make sure that every member knows what her responsibilities are, and review the deadlines for those responsibilities. The notes might also include a summary of conclusions that were reached, as well as any assignments or follow-up activities that were agreed on. If the session was one-time, or was the last of a series, your job may now be done. Leading an effective group discussion takes preparation if you have the opportunity for it, an understanding of and commitment to an open process, and a willingness to let go of your ego and biases. If you can do these things, the chances are you can become a discussion leader that can help groups achieve the results they want. Model the behavior and attitudes you want group members to employ. Use encouraging body language and tone of voice, as well as words. Lean forward when people are talking, for example, keep your body position open and approachable, smile when appropriate, and attend carefully to everyone, not just to those who are most articulate. Give positive feedback for joining the discussion. If group members are confused, revisiting the comments or points that caused the confusion, or restating them more clearly, may be helpful. Being aware of the reactions of individuals and of the group as a whole can make it possible to expose and use conflict, or to head off unnecessary emotional situations and misunderstandings. Instead, questions should require some thought from group members, and should ask for answers that include reasons or analysis. Control your own biases. While you should point out factual errors or ideas that are inaccurate and disrespectful of others, an open process demands that you not impose your views on the group, and that you keep others from doing the same. Group members should be asked to make rational decisions about the positions or views they want to agree with, and ultimately the ideas that the group agrees on should be those that make the most sense to them " whether they coincide with yours or not. Pointing out bias " including your own " and discussing it helps both you and group members try to be objective. A constant question that leaders " and members " of any group have is what to do about racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks, especially in a homogeneous group where most or all of the members except the leader may agree with them. There is no clear-cut answer, although if they pass unchallenged, it may appear you condone the attitude expressed. How you challenge prejudice is the real question. Encourage disagreement, and help the group use it creatively. Disagreement is not to be smoothed over, but rather to be analyzed and used. When there are conflicting opinions " especially when both can be backed up by reasonable arguments " the real discussion starts. Disagreement makes people think. All too often, conflict " whether conflicting opinions, conflicting world views, or conflicting personalities " is so frightening to people that they do their best to ignore it or gloss it over. That reaction not only leaves the conflict unresolved " and therefore growing, so that it will be much stronger when it surfaces later " but fails to examine the issues that it raises. If those are brought out in the open and discussed reasonably, the two sides often find that they have as much agreement as disagreement, and can resolve their differences by putting their ideas together. Keep your mouth shut as

much as possible. By and large, discussion groups are for the group members. You may be a member of the group and have been asked by the others to act as leader, in which case you certainly have a right to be part of the discussion although not to dominate. People who are particularly articulate or assertive, who have strong feelings that they urgently want to express, or who simply feel the need to and have the ability to dominate can take up far more than their fair share of a discussion. This often means that quieter people have little or no chance to speak, and that those who disagree with the dominant individuals are shouted down and cease trying to make points. Sometimes individuals or factions that are trying to dominate can disrupt the process of the group. Both Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter contain some guidelines for dealing with this type of situation. You can find out what someone thinks by asking, or by listening when he speaks. She may or may not represent the general opinion of people from situations similar to hers—or there may not be a general opinion among them. In a group discussion, no one should be asked or assumed to represent anything more than herself. The exception here is when someone has been chosen by her community or group to represent its point of view in a multi-sector discussion. She may have agreed to sponsor particular ideas that are important to her group, but she may still have her own opinions as well, especially in other areas. Model learning behavior, not teaching behavior. You have some choices about how you do that, however. If the question is less clear-cut, you might want to throw it back to the group, and use it as a spur to discussion. In Summary Group discussions are common in our society, and have a variety of purposes, from planning an intervention or initiative to mutual support to problem-solving to addressing an issue of local concern. It helps greatly if the leader comes to the task with a democratic or, especially, a collaborative style, and with an understanding of how a group functions.

*This is an agenda of a work team at a non-profit organization.] Executive Team. May 13, 9 - 11 a.m. Agenda (The times indicated for each item are guidelines.). 1.*

What do the rest of you think? How do you restore peace? Can you set up your meeting to reduce the risk of conflict? How do you turn the conflict and tension into a positive force, and one that generates better solutions and results? Can you reduce the negative impact of conflict? As we do so, remember that there are two separate underlying reasons for conflict in meetings. Types of Conflict Conflict in business meetings usually falls into two categories: Real professional differences – Conflict can arise from very real differences in professional opinions. But conflict is more likely when the outcome is extremely important, when the decision being made is irreversible, or when the impact of making the wrong decision will reflect badly on those involved. When this type of conflict is left unresolved, it can rapidly spoil relationships. Power struggles and personality issues – Conflict can arise when individuals or groups dislike one-another, or feel that their positions are being threatened. Reducing the Opportunity for Conflict The best defenses against conflict often involve preparing thoroughly before the meeting, and chairing strongly during the meeting. See *Running Effective Meetings* for practical tips on how to do this. Finding This Article Useful? Read our Privacy Policy Send out the agenda in advance, and when the meeting begins, ask the group to agree to it. If a conflict arises, a good agenda makes it easier to recognize that the group is going off course. You should also be alert for meetings where the atmosphere and dynamics of the people involved make it more likely for conflict to arise. These include gatherings where "known troublemakers" – individuals or groups with a history of causing conflict – are present. Read more about this in *Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing*. In these situations, state the meeting rules in advance. For example, meeting rules might be as follows: Individuals will be allowed to speak after raising their hands – and only one person may speak at a time. The chair may summarize what has been said to make sure everyone understands. Everyone will be invited to contribute, so that one person cannot take over the discussion. As chair, you must be firm about managing and enforcing these rules! If the team needs to make decisions, you may also want to establish the decision making process, and ask all participants to agree to this. Gaining Benefits From Conflict Have you ever attended a meeting in which a conflict – probably the "real professional disagreement" type – was successfully resolved? If so, you can appreciate the benefits of working through your differences to a satisfactory conclusion. Conflict is not, therefore, something you need to avoid at all costs. In fact, conflict can sometimes be the quickest and best way to make creative progress. Spotting Potential Conflicts Early One key to spotting the first signs of conflict is watching "body language. Make sure that people have the opportunity to express disagreement as soon as possible, so that issues can be resolved and the discussion can proceed on a correct basis. How do you know if someone is frustrated? Look for these signs: Making facial expressions of amazement or disagreement, such as shaking the head or rolling the eyes. The person may also fidget, or move around in a restless or nervous manner. Whispering or writing notes to another person. This can apply to both types of conflict. Staring, possibly in an intimidating way, at the speaker or potential target of confrontation. When you spot the signs of conflict brewing, use the resolution approaches set out in the next section proactively rather than reactively. And nipping the problem in the bud is usually better, because then no one will have to live with the memory of "what was said at that meeting". Resolving Conflict So, what if you follow these suggestions, and an unexpected conflict still occurs? What do you do then? Here are some approaches and techniques you can use. How does this work in practice? To achieve this, use some carefully phrased questions. Ask for specific examples, and perhaps suggestions for how the "disagreeable" idea would need to be changed to make it acceptable to them. In some cases, the alterations they want may be quite small. When a conflict arises in a meeting, you, as the chair need to take control. Remove or Reduce the Perceived Threat A key cause of anger or conflict is that people may perceive that they, or things they hold dear, are threatened. Perhaps they feel that something being discussed threatens their reputation, judgment, chances of leading a successful project, or chances of getting a bonus. There are two parts to this: This is where you need to explore

the issue and fully understand what it is. Here you need to supply the correct information. Or it may be that the perception is correct, and the person is right to feel threatened. Here you need to address the situation. Another thing you can do is make sure that you clear up unknowns, because the unknown is often treated as a threat.

**Key Points** The best way to avoid conflicts in your meetings is to prepare properly, taking all factors into consideration. If anger and conflict arise, move back to your agenda by questioning people to determine the immediate cause of the conflict. Develop questions to get people to clearly state their problems and issues. This may not only help prevent a conflict, but it should also bring useful clarity to the situation. Subscribe to our free newsletter , or join the Mind Tools Club and really supercharge your career!

**Chapter 6 : Civic groups & public policy -- week eight**

*Some groups have a broader focus than a particular issue or set policy issues, these are known as ideological groups, and they promote a more general ideological approach on how government should deal with a host of issues.*

The difference between meetings with and without agendas can mean chaos, ruffled feathers and very few accomplishments. An agenda communicates to attendees that the meeting will be conducted in an orderly fashion and that productivity is the goal. Businesses hold meetings to get things done, share information, develop plans, document progress, provide clarity and make decisions. An agenda can ensure that the meeting stays on track and that special projects and routine operations proceed as intended. An agenda can help a group of employees function as an effective team. Preparation and Planning Development of a meeting agenda is the first step in preparing for a meeting and planning the issues to be discussed. By sending the agenda out in advance of the meeting, attendees can provide updates on agenda items or suggest other issues for inclusion. The meeting planner can contact executive-level attendees to get their input for agenda items. Reviewing the agenda in advance gives attendees time to put together reports and other documents required for the meeting. Review of and additions to the agenda can also be performed before the start of the meeting. Acceptance of the agenda by attendees in advance is an agreement by all on how to conduct the meeting and the issues to be discussed. Control Everyone involved in a meeting has a greater sense of control with a meeting agenda. The agenda is often sent out in advance of the meeting so attendees know what to expect and have time to prepare. An agenda gives the person conducting the meeting control over the flow of discussions, the issues covered and the attendees responsible for reporting specific information at the meeting. An agenda also can help keep the meeting within a predetermined time frame controlling when issues are discussed. People are less likely to slow the meeting with interruptions if they know that their issue is on the agenda. Each attendee can relax knowing that the meeting is under control and that issues that are important to each are listed on the agenda. Productivity An agenda increases productivity at meetings. Attendees understand that all items on the agenda must be discussed and are likely to move at a pace that ensures they will cover everything. Agendas make it clear what the action items are and who are the responsible people. This allows attendees to leave meetings knowing what must be accomplished before the next meeting. The agenda also allows attendees to review action items at the next meeting and receive progress reports of progress. The agenda helps attendees zero in on the areas where decisions are needed and clears the way for progress. Attendees can leave the meeting feeling a sense of accomplishment with the agenda to verify their productivity. Documentation As meeting attendees work their way through the agenda, the person taking minutes notes on the agenda the results of each discussion, which action items were completed or newly developed, reports given, issues to be resolved and other documentation of events at the meeting. The agenda notes help with creating minutes that match the flow of the meeting and also provide comprehensive documentation of the meeting.

## Chapter 7 : The Policy Circle

*Then groups and communities represent a "collected agenda of issues" and "one joins a group by adopting an agenda". On the other hand, agenda setting defines groups as "collections of people based on some shared values, attitudes, or opinions" that individuals join. [55].*

Evaluation Incrementalism Changes in American domestic policy occur slowly. Many interest groups will fight against making radical changes, and many lawmakers are reluctant to change things too quickly. Political scientists call this phenomenon incrementalism because policy gets tweaked slightly over time rather than dramatically altered all at once. The National Agenda When something becomes a concern for a significant number of people, that concern becomes part of the national agenda, the list of things that the public wants the government to address. An issue becomes part of the national agenda for any of the following reasons: As part of a larger trend: Some trends, like the rise in violent crime in the s and early s, lead people to demand government action, especially for stronger federal law enforcement. After a major event: Sometimes, a single event forces an issue onto the agenda. The September 11th attacks, for example, led many Americans to demand an increase in national security. Likewise, the Exxon Valdez oil spill in prompted many to call for environmental protection. Through an interest group: An interest group or members of a social movement work to raise public awareness of an issue. If enough people get involved, the issue can get put on the national agenda. Prominent politicians attempt to put an issue on the agenda through speeches. The president is particularly able to do this due to the amount of media coverage of the White House. After an issue gets put on the national agenda, people will begin petitioning the government to take action. Formulation Policy formulation determines how the government will respond to problems on the national agenda. Although people may agree that a particular problem exists, they might strongly disagree about how to remedy it. Members of Congress, executive branch officials, and interest groups may all propose solutions, which then prompt intense debate in the media and in Congress.

Chapter 8 : Agenda (meeting) - Wikipedia

*Workplaces that Work Effective Meetings Despite the daily onslaughts of e-mails, phone calls and memos, meetings are still one of the most effective ways that people share and exchange information, get feedback, plan, collaborate and make important decisions for their organizations.*

Our blueprint will help you write clear meeting objectives and successfully engage your attendees. [Read More](#) , whether for business or otherwise, you should not have to waste time creating an agenda from scratch. [Read More](#) can get you off to a great and efficient start. **Team Meeting Agendas** Team meetings can often have a more casual feel to them. With a basic gray background, the table structure works well providing a comprehensive agenda. [Read More](#) , these templates include all of the information you need. With both physical location and conference number details, attendee and presenter name fields, and clearly marked sections, you can just swap out the details as needed. For many, this provides a cleaner and more professional view. **Formal and Board Meeting Agendas** For a formal meeting agenda, you want to have a well-organized, comprehensive, and crisp meeting agenda. The formal meeting agenda template from [Office Templates Online](#) accomplishes that. With an elegant black and white table structure, this is the perfect template for your formal meeting agendas. If you have ever attended or planned a board meeting, then you know that the agenda includes much more information than a simple team meeting agenda. With a simple outline format, it is both easy to edit and read. **Seminars and Client Meeting Agendas** When you are planning a meeting or seminar and the agenda is itinerary-based, then the format needs to reflect that. With times listed on the left and titles for those time periods in bold font, it allows the attendees to clearly see what events are happening when. Another meeting itinerary template from [TidyForms](#) achieves the same task by highlighting the times and events. For use with smaller amounts of details, this template is an effective option. Just swap out the title, dates, location, and names as needed. Both templates are from [Vertex42](#) and are only different in their format. For many this provides a simpler view. **Specific to Microsoft Word** If you are using Microsoft Word , you already have access to several useful meeting agenda templates. **Formal and Informal Meeting Agendas** From board meetings to those for small teams, Microsoft Word provides nicely-formatted and easy-to-use agenda templates. The formal meeting agenda template is in a nice outline format with Times New Roman font for a classic look and feel. The basics include roll call, approval, open issues, and new business. The informal agenda template is ideal for both internal and external meetings. It has a clean interface in an outline format, which makes it easy to enter information, and there is a spot at the top for your company logo. You can use a combination of audio, visuals, and chat to engage your audience. [Read More](#) , an attractive agenda that is also functional is the way to go. The conference meeting agenda is set on a nice, clear background for a classy look. The necessary items are all included, such as start and end times per date and descriptions of the items. This is an itinerary-based template, so it is easy to scan and view what is happening at specific times. If you are planning an all-day meeting, seminar, or one-on-one appointment, this client visit template is time-based like the [PTA Meeting Agenda](#) and provides a very simple format. The date field is a drop-down calendar making it simple to pop in the date. But if you plan meetings on a regular basis, templates can save you tons of time and energy, allowing you to spend more time on important tasks. Create a template to set up your next meeting in record time. Stay informed by joining our newsletter!

**Chapter 9 : SparkNotes: Public Policy: How Policy Gets Made**

*The political channels through which people's concerns become political issues on the policy agenda. In the United States, linkage institutions include elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media.*

They discovered that certain individual and group characteristics are likely to act as contingent conditions of media impact and proposed a model of "audience effects". Thus, media effects are contingent on issue-specific audience characteristics. Erbring, Goldenberg and Miller have also demonstrated that people who do not talk about political issues are more subject to agenda-setting influence because they depend more heavily on media content than those who receive information from other sources, including their colleagues and friends. Because of their link to personal concerns, these issues almost compel attention from political elites as well as the news media. Moreover, with this type of issues the problem would be of general concern even without attention from the news media. Research performed by Zucker suggests that an issue is obtrusive if most members of the public have had direct contact with it, and less obtrusive if audience members have not had direct experience. The latter may push the story past the threshold of inattention, but it is also important to look at the kind of coverage to explain how a certain incident becomes an issue. To explain differences in the correlation, McCombs and colleagues created the concept of "need for orientation", which "describes individual differences in the desire for orienting cues and background information". Relevance suggests that an individual will not seek news media information if an issue is not personally relevant. Hence, if relevance is low, people will feel the need for less orientation. There are many issues in our country that are just not relevant to people, because they do not affect us. Many news organizations attempt to frame issues in a way that attempts to make them relevant to its audiences. Frequently, individuals already have all the information that they desire about a topic. Their degree of uncertainty is low. Research done by Weaver in suggested that individuals vary on their need for orientation. The higher levels of interest and uncertainty produce higher levels of need for orientation. So the individual would be considerably likely to be influenced by the media stories psychological aspect of theory. As agenda-setting theory was being developed, scholars pointed out many attributes that describe the object. Each of the objects on an agenda has a lot of attributes containing cognitive components such as information that describes characteristics of the object, and an affective component including tones positive, negative, neutral of the characteristics on agenda. The agenda setting theory and the second level of agenda setting, framing, are both relevant and similar in demonstrating how society is influenced by media, but they describe a different process of influence. One tells us what information to process and the other tells us how to process that information. It is said that there are two main attributes of the second-level of agenda setting. Those include substantive and affective. The substantive factor has to do mainly with things such as personality and ideology. The affective factor is focused on the positive, negative, and neutral side of things. Furthermore, Ghanem [36] demonstrated that the certain attributes agendas in the news with low psychological distance, drove compelling arguments for the salience of public agenda. An example of framing is when a company releases a statement that sounds a lot better than what it actually is. They "frame" it to sound better and more appealing to the public. This can also take place in crisis management, when companies release a statement to save the companies reputation after a crisis occurred. This was very prominent in the BP oil spill several years ago. It also suggests that framing is a form of gatekeeping, similar to the agenda setting theory. McCombs, Shaw, Weaver and colleagues generally argue that framing is a part of agenda-setting that operates as a "second-level" or secondary effect. Dietram Scheufele has argued the opposite. Scheufele argues that framing and agenda-setting possess distinct theoretical boundaries, operate via distinct cognitive processes accessibility vs. Priming is considered to be the step past agenda setting, and is also referred to as the last step of the process. Priming is primarily used in political settings. It discusses how the media will choose to leave some issues about the candidates out of coverage, while presenting other issues in the fore front. This process creates different standards by which the public evaluates candidates. As well, by reporting the issues that have the most salience on the public; they are not objectively presenting both candidates equally. According to Weaver, [39] framing and second-level

agenda setting have the following characteristics: Both are more concerned with how issues or other objects are depicted in the media than with which issues or objects are more or less prominently reported. Both focus on most salient or prominent aspects of themes or descriptions of the objects of interest. Both are concerned with ways of thinking rather than objects of thinking

**Differences:** Framing does seem to include a broader range of cognitive processes – moral evaluations, causal reasoning, appeals to principle, and recommendations for treatment of problems – than does second-level agenda-setting the salience of attributes of an object. Scheufele and Tewksbury argue that "framing differs significantly from these accessibility-based models [i. It is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences;" [40] the difference between whether we think about an issue and how we think about it. Framing and agenda setting differ in their functions in the process of news production, information processing and media effects. Although "both frame building and agenda building refer to macroscopic mechanisms that deal with message construction rather than media effects", frame building is more concerned with the news production process than agenda building. In other words, "how forces and groups in society try to shape public discourse about an issue by establishing predominant labels is of far greater interest from a framing perspective than from a traditional agenda-setting one. For framing and agenda-setting, different conditions seem to be needed in processing messages to produce respective effects. Framing effect is more concerned with audience attention to news messages, while agenda setting is more concerned with repeated exposure to messages. Agenda-setting effects are determined by the ease with which people can retrieve from their memory issues recently covered by mass media, while framing is the extent to which media messages fit ideas or knowledge people have in their knowledge store. Based on these shared characteristics, McCombs and colleagues [41] recently argued that framing effects should be seen as the extension of agenda setting. In other words, according to them, the premise that framing is about selecting "a restricted number of thematically related attributes" [42] for media representation can be understood as the process of transferring the salience of issue attributes i. Accessibility-based explanation of agenda-setting is also applied to second-level agenda-setting. That is, transferring the salience of issue attributes i. For framing effects, empirical evidence shows that the impact of frames on public perceptions is mainly determined by perceived importance of specific frames rather than by the quickness of retrieving frames. On a related note, Scheufele and Tewksbury [40] argues that, because accessibility and applicability vary in their functions of media effects, "the distinction between accessibility and applicability effects has obvious benefits for understanding and predicting the effects of dynamic information environments". Taken together, it can be concluded that the integration of framing into agenda-setting is either impossible because they are based on different theoretical premises or imprudent because merging the two concepts would result in the loss of our capabilities to explain various media effects. Price and Tewksbury argued that agenda-setting effects are based on the accessibility model of information processing. Accessibility can be defined as "how much" or "how recently" a person has been exposed to certain issues Kim et al. Specifically, individuals try to make less cognitive effort in forming social judgments, they are more likely to rely on the information that is easily accessible Higgins, The concept of accessibility is the foundation of a memory-based model Scheufele, When individuals receive and process information, they develop memory traces that can be easily recalled to make decisions on a certain issue. This may sound similar to attribute agenda-setting. Both seem to examine which attributes or aspects of an issue are emphasized in the media Kim et al. Some scholars even argue that framing should be considered as an extension of agenda-setting McCombs, However, framing is based on the applicability model, which is conceptually different from the accessibility model used in agenda-setting. According to Goffman, individuals actively classify and interpret their life experiences to make sense of the world around them. Kim and his colleagues provide distinction between the applicability and accessibility models is important in terms of issue salience. Framing assumes that each individual will have its own interpretation of an issue, regardless of the salience of an issue. Specifically, it focuses on the "terminological or semantic differences" of how an issue is described. Taken together, the accessibility of issue salience makes the two models of information processing different Scheufele, An emotion dimension[ edit ] According to the theory of affective intelligence, "emotions enhance citizen rationality". It argues that emotions, particularly

negative ones, are crucial in having people pay attention to politics and help shape their political views. They find that apart from the cognitive assessment - which is commonly studied before, emotion is another critical dimension of the Second-level affects in Agenda-setting. Three conclusions are presented: Agenda setting between media and other sources[ edit ] Recent research on agenda-setting digs into the question of "who sets the media agenda". McCombs and Bell [49] observe that journalists live in "an ambiguous social world" so that they will "rely on one another for confirmation and as a source of ideas". Lim [50] finds that the major news websites in South Korea influence the agendas of online newspapers and also influence each other to some extent. According to McCombs and Funk , [51] intermedia agenda setting is a new path of the future agenda setting research. These publications have a direct effect on local newspapers and television networks that are viewed on a less elite scale. Website networks favor other websites that tend to have a higher viewing and SEO. This type of relationship is known as Power Law which allows the media to have a stronger effect on agenda setting. Based on that, Guo, Vu and McCombs [53] bring up a new theoretical model called Network Agenda Setting Model, which they refer to as the third-level agenda-setting. Twitter application[ edit ] Over the last few years, the increase in social media has had a direct effect on political campaigns particularly Twitter. Its unique platform allows users to showcase their political opinion without functioning two directions. It is currently being viewed as a platform for political advancement. Before the use of Twitter, political candidates were using blogs and websites to portray their message and to gain more attention and popularity among their followers. Some of the most followed users on Twitter are past and current Presidents of the United States and other political figures. Twitter is being used as a resource to gather information, reach a larger audience and engagement, stay up to date with current social and political issues, and to achieve the agenda building role. Twitter helps express public opinion which in turn allows a relationship to form between the media and the public. Some may argue that Twitter is still being used as a place for people to follow celebrity news and the culture of Hollywood more than it is being used for important issues and world news. Some may also argue that Twitter does not have the ability to set an agenda as much as conventional news outlets. A study found a positive correlation between issue ranks in news coverage and issue ranks in Twitter feeds, suggesting that Twitter and conventional news outlets by and large reflected each other. Non-political application[ edit ] McCombs and Shaw originally established agenda-setting within the context of a presidential election. Many subsequent studies have looked at agenda setting in the context of an election or in otherwise political contexts. However, more recently scholars have been studying agenda setting in the context of brand community. A brand is defined as what resides in the minds of individuals about a product or service.