

## GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

The following ground rules have helped make meetings more productive:

1. **Participate fully.** It's alright to disagree. Everyone should have the opportunity to state his or her own views, regardless of rank or other differences.
2. **Work on the problem.** Put other issues aside, including personalities, offices, or other differences. Show respect for each other.
3. **Focus on interests, not positions.** Explain why you favor a particular course of action. Invite questions so you can explain your reasons fully. Balance advocacy and inquiry.
4. **Share all relevant information.** Be specific. Agree on what important words mean. Discuss "undiscussable" issues.
5. **Stay focused.** Discuss a topic long enough for everybody to be clear about it.
6. **Decide how the group will make decisions.** Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed.

Adapted from *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups* by Roger Schwarz. Published by Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1994 and 2005.