

SCRIPT – USE OF COMMITTEES IN THE ORGANIZATION

Cover Page – Slide 1

I welcome you all to this exciting session on the **USE OF COMMITTEES IN THE ORGANIZATION**.

Committees are important factors of modern organizational life. They can be found in almost all types of organizations such as government, non-governmental organizations, autonomous organizations and so forth. They are also operating in educational-institutions, industrial organizations, and in purely commercial enterprises.

Even in the universities or banks, for example, there may be dozens of standing and-or-special committees; either to share in administration or advise the administration on policy.

A board of directors of a company is also a committee as are its various constituent groups such as the executive committee, the finance committee, the salary and wages-review committee, the grievance committee, the planning committee, and other standing and special committees.

Learning Outcomes – Slide 2

Let us now take a look at our expected learning outcomes.

It is my hope; that, at the end of this session, listener will be able to:

- Explain the purposes of forming committees in an organization.
- State the advantages and disadvantages of committees.
- Enumerate the fundamentals of committee operation.

Introduction – Slide 3

What is a Committee?

According to Oxford Dictionary: A group of people; appointed for a specific function; by a larger group; and typically consisting of members of that group: is called a committee

The Business Dictionary defines a committee as; Individual or a group, appointed by an agency, authority, or larger assembly, to whom a matter is referred, or is committed for attention, investigation, analysis, or resolution.

While the Traditional definition of committee says, a committee is instituted to deal with a specific problem or problem areas in an organization.

What is a committee?

A group of people appointed for a specific function by a larger group and typically consisting of members of that group. (**Oxford Dictionary**)

Individual or a group, appointed by an agency, authority, or larger assembly, to whom a matter is referred, or is committed for attention, investigation, analysis, or resolution. (**Business Dictionary**)

A committee is instituted to deal with a specific problem or problem areas. (**Traditional Definition**)

Functions of a Committee – Slide 4

Here are Some functions of Committee.

Important features of Committees are that they are delegated definite responsibility and authority for doing a specific job, such as **reviewing budgets, formulating plans for new products, making policy decisions on wages and salary and compensation plans.**

Others may only have the **power to make recommendations and suggestions to a designated official.** Whatever be the task, committees generally enjoy authority / power for carrying out the assigned tasks.

Can you think about your organization and write down some committees that you know of and their functions?

Nature of Committee – Slide 5

1. A committee is a gathering of people representing different functions or spheres of knowledge, who come together to promote a common purpose or fulfill a common task or solve a problem, by interchanging of views.
2. The character and composition of a committee is often spelled out in the bylaws or administrative procedures of the company.
3. A committee usually has a fixed membership. In most cases, members are appointed, although sometimes, as with the board of directors, they may be elected.
4. In its deliberations, a committee usually follows certain definite written rules and procedures. Some committees can function if a quorum is complete; others only if all the members are present.
5. A committee may be granted authority to make or recommend decisions, or it may serve merely in an advisory capacity.
6. A committee may also be set up on a standing basis (Standing Committee) which is of a permanent nature; or on an adhoc basis, which may be for a specific purpose only. It may be formal or informal.

Pros and Cons of Committees to an Organization – Slide 6

Let us take a look at some pros and cons of Committees to an organization. The following are reasons for constituting committees in an organization:

1. Group Discussions and Decisions.

Since committees are made up of people with diverse background, experience and training, they can think the impact of the problems from different point of views and recommend appropriate solutions. Such decisions are bound to be more suitable than individual judgements.

2. Fear of Authority.

If too much functional authority is delegated to a single person, there is always a fear that the authority may be misused. Committees avoid undue concentration of authority in the hands of an individual or a few.

3. Representation of interested Group.

A policy decision may affect the interests of different sections. The committees provide an opportunity to represent their interest to the top management for consideration. This will facilitate the management to make a balanced decision.

4. Coordination of Functions.

They are highly useful in bringing co-ordination between different managerial functions.

5. Transmission of Information.

Committees serve as a best medium to transmit information since they generally comprise of the representatives of various sections. Misinterpretation is almost avoided.

6. Consolidation of Authority.

Many special problems arising in individual departments cannot be solved by the departmental managers. The committees, on the other hand, permits the management to consolidate authority which is spread over several departments.

7. Motivation through Participation.

Managerial decisions cannot be put into action without the co-operation of the operating personnel. Since the committees provide an opportunity for them to participate in the decision-making, the management can gain their confidence and co-operation.

8. Avoidance of Action.

The committee system also helps the manager who wants to postpone or avoid action. By referring the complicated matters to the committees, the managers can delay the action.

9. Educational Value.

Participation in committee meetings provides a beautiful ground for development of young executives. Through observation, exchange of information and cross examination, the young executives can broaden their knowledge and sharpen their understanding.

Pros and Cons of Committees to an Organization – Slide 7

Disadvantages of Committees

These are some demerits of committees

1. High Cost in Time and Money.

Committees take a lot of time to take a decision. The prolonged sessions of the committee results in a high expenditure. Generally speaking, committees are constituted only to avoid or postpone decisions. Hence, delay in decision has become an inherent feature of committees.

2. Indecisive Action.

In many cases, committees are unable to take any constructive decision because of the differences of opinions among their members.

3. Compromising Attitude.

Many decisions taken by a committee are not the result of joint thinking and collective judgements. But they are only compromises reached between the various members. Hence, the decisions of the committees are not real decisions in the strict sense.

4. Dominance of a Few.

Collective thinking and group judgement are only in theory but not in practice. The decisions of the committees are generally the decisions of the chairman or any strong dominant members.

5. Suppression of Ideas.

Many smart members who can contribute new ideas, deliberately keep their mouth shut in order to avoid hard feelings.

6. Splitting of Responsibilities.

The greatest disadvantage of this system is the splitting of authority among the committee members. When authority is split up, no one in particular can be held responsible for the outcome of the committee.

7. Political Decisions.

Since the committee decisions are influenced by the dominant members, the decisions of the committee cannot be taken as meritorious one with broader outlook.

Fundamentals of Effective Committee Operation – Slide 8

The following are Fundamentals of Effective Committee Operation

For a committee to perform its function effectively, the following ... must be in place:

1. Clear Constitution or Terms of Reference.

The constitution sets out function of the committee, reporting lines, membership, Chair, quorum, and frequency of meetings.

2. Effective Chairman or Chairperson:

As the case may be. The chairman acts as the presiding officer during meetings and he is also the reporting officer to the board.

3. Effective Committee Member or Members.

Members of committee may be constituted of staff of the organization with diverse knowledge, experience and background who will contribute their ideas to matters under discussion.

4. Effective Executive Officer or Officers. Examples are secretary, public relations officer, treasurer, and so on

5. they must meet regularly to review their performance.

Ensuring Peak performance – Slide 9

- Ensure that members are aware of their responsibilities
- Ensure that members work towards the achievement of a common goal
- Ensure that any overlap between committee and individual responsibilities does not result in duplicated tasks

Being an Effective Board Member Dos and Don'ts – Slide 10

Being an Effective Board Member: Dos and Don'ts:

- **Insist on passion.** Make sure you're passionate about the non-profit, and don't bring on anyone who hasn't demonstrated passion for your organization's cause. Understand the goals and mission of the organization. While this may seem obvious, it's important that you can clearly communicate what your non-profit does to potential donors or incoming board members. Practice your organization's elevator pitch!
- **Get up to speed quickly.** Before the first meeting, try to get together with veteran board members so they can explain the bylaws and catch you up on current initiatives. This is a good practice for all new board members.
- **Focus on efficiency.** It's reasonable to expect the executive director to send materials for upcoming board meetings out a week in advance and highlight topics for discussion. Ensure meetings are efficient by focusing on topics of consequence.
- **Do not assume you or everyone else Understand what the expectations are from the start.** take the time to explain the objectives of the committee to everyone. In the same vein, ask, when in doubt about an idea or concept specifically as it relates with the goals of the committee.
- **Do not just warm the bench.** Good board members show up at meetings, are prepared, and have done their homework. If you put in time and effort, you will find your board experience more rewarding and meaningful.
- **Give every member a chance.** When it comes time to grow your board, get to know potential of every board member by giving them the opportunity to serve in sub-committees of the board. That way they will learn the mission and rhythm of the organization. It will also give incumbent board members time to determine whether the prospective director would be an effective addition to the board.
- **Do not be a perfectionist.** Boards are composed of human beings, so mistakes will happen. Don't let unrealistic expectations get in the way of what you're there to do—move the mission of the organization forward.

Conclusion – Slide 11

In Conclusion, note that; Committees and task forces have become more and more necessary and important, as the organization grows larger and more complex. And Because of the wealth of knowledge, skills and experience that members bring to bear in their collective information and analysis of issues, they are more likely to come up with solutions to complex problems.

To this end, here are some Points to Remember

- Remember that each person has something to offer.
- Formulate objectives carefully and take them seriously.
- Remember that everyone thinks in a different way.
- Always, encourage positive contributions from members.
- Look for ways to resolve conflict constructively.