

### ***Cutting People Off***

Be strong, because this isn't simple. Consider things like not cutting people off before the idea comes out, helping make people's comments succinct and pointed, and above all hewing to the original time slot agreed on.

One more very important point: Cutting people off requires that you always save face for them before the members of your group. Graceful outs, with some humor, like:

"You're really wound up in this, aren't you, Susan?" before you say you have to move on takes care of Susan's zeal and commitment and lets her off with an excuse. Always give a preface before you peremptorily end someone talking.

Use a flip chart with your agenda and time allotments on it. Blaming your cut-off on that inanimate, objective page made by group decision will usually get you right off the hook.

If the subject brought up is irrelevant, say:

"Sounds like another agenda item to me. Will you please save it and bring it up for the next meeting? Please send me a memo on it."

This is better than saying something harsh or denigrating about irrelevance and makes the gaffe a plus instead.

### ***Increasing Participation***

"Sorry, folks, but we have only two more minutes on this. Let's hear from . . ." is *not* a good idea.

Putting someone on the spot who hasn't spoken can be dangerous. He/she may have nothing to say or be so intimidated by what has gone before that he can't speak. It's best to *ask* if anyone else has something to say. You know your movers and opposers. Lead them to start, but be careful how you spotlight the non-participants.

### ***For reluctant participants***

For followers or bystanders, ask them to comment by saying, "Let's hear from X, Y, and then Z (the follower) on this," giving Z plenty of warning to come up with something, yet not asking him/her to be first.

Another way to activate those silent types is to focus people on a specific aspect you want them to talk about:

"Nina, costs are your department. Why don't you help us out with that?"

Try talking to them during a break to get a fix on what they're