Program Development Committee: Alternative Meeting Formats

A typical Program Development Committee (PDC) meeting is likely to involve going to the local office to sit down with other members of the PDC. This traditional meeting format is important, but is it always feasible? Consider the alternative meeting options listed below. They should be used to complement — but not completely replace — the traditional meeting format.

Face-to-Face Meeting
Strengths:

- Members can get a "feel" for the group.
- Participants can read body language.
- Idea generation may be enhanced.
- Relationships may be built more easily.

Challenges:

- A few individuals can dominate the discussion.
- Travel is required.

Individual Consultations
Strengths:

- Conversations can be more detailed.
- Idea generation is enhanced.

Challenges:

- Individual meetings take more time.
- Each discussion must be summarized and shared.

Conference Call
Strengths:

- Little or no travel is required.
- Members can connect from almost anywhere.

Challenges:

- Getting a "feel" for the group is more difficult.
- Members can't read body language.
- PDC members can't get to know each other as easily.
- The flow of conversation can be stifled.

Web Conference
Strengths:

- Audiovisuals are easily shared.
- Little or no travel is required.
- Members can connect from almost anywhere.

Challenges:

- Internet speed can be uneven.
- The flow of conversation can be stifled.
- Technology sometimes fails.

Email
Strengths:

- Idea generation may be enhanced.
- Responses may be more timely.

Challenges:

- Each discussion must be summarized and shared.
- Reaching a collective decision may be difficult.

Electronic Poll
Strengths:

- A poll simplifies coming to consensus on dates, times, or locations.
- Responses may be more timely.

Challenges:

- Idea generation is more difficult.
- Responses must be summarized and shared.