



## Snippet #160 Top 5 Meeting Time Savers

1. General consent – The chair asks if there is any objection to a particular action, such as “is there any objection to taking a ten minute recess?” If there is no objection, the motion is adopted by general consent. There’s no need for a second, discussion, or a vote. It’s all been handled with one step. This tool can be used for any situation. If one person objects, the chair simply goes back to where the six steps left off by asking for a second, or stating the question and putting in on the floor for discussion.

Consent agenda – This is an expanded form of general consent. Instead of one motion, an unlimited number of items can be put together and adopted all at once without separate debate and vote. Any member can remove any item(s) for any, or no, reason. Although Robert’s Rules says that the consent agenda must be adopted by a vote, A Great Meeting believes that if nothing is removed from the consent agenda, all items are *automatically* adopted. If you want to vote against something, remove it from the consent agenda. What could be simpler than that?

2. Approving minutes – Most people don’t handle the approval of minutes correctly. The question isn’t whether we like the minutes, the question is whether the minutes are correct. If they are correct, why would we vote? To make them *more* correct? Instead of asking for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, the chair asks “Are there corrections to the minutes?” Corrections are handled by general consent. If there are no corrections, the chair says: “If there are no [further] corrections, the minutes stand as [read] [distributed].”
3. Handling seconds – Most chairs unintentionally force their boards to take up issues they don’t really want to, because they don’t know what to do if a motion isn’t seconded right away. The secret is three simple sentences, repeated with a short pause between. “Is there a second?” “If there is no second the motion will not be considered.” “There being no second, the motion will not be considered.” Then move on. If at any time someone says “second” simply put the motion on the floor with “It is moved and seconded that. . .”
4. Follow the basic rules of debate – the best way to save time is to make sure the board is efficient with its debate. A person cannot speak a second time on a motion if anyone who has not yet spoken wishes to speak. When that second turn is used up, that’s it unless the board extends debate by a two-thirds vote. If you can’t say it with two chances, you may not get a third.
5. Adjourning – It’s a minimal timesaver, but it ends the meeting on a positive note. If the assembly has completed the agenda, there’s only two sentences to close. “Is there any further business?” “There being no further business, this meeting is adjourned.” Simple as that. Items that were not taken up before adjournment are automatically placed on the next agenda (this is what “unfinished business” really is).