



# How to Play “Follow the Leader”

This is the second of a two-part series on running effective staff meetings.

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In most staff meetings, subjects will be discussed at length, but after the actual meeting there is no significant follow-through. Promises are not kept and action is not taken on the subjects discussed. In order for staff and doctors to be made accountable for items that need attention, a “Promise and Source Sheet” can be used effectively. This sheet is made up of three sections:

- Promise (What the task to be done might be)
- Due Date (Date of completion)
- Source (Person responsible for the task)

Example: Promise and Source Sheet

PROMISE	DUE DATE	SOURCE (Staff Member Accountable)

This sheet is used in every meeting. When there is an item discussed that needs attention, or further follow-up, the facilitator simply writes the promise, the due date for its completion and the person or source to whom the assignment will be delegated.

This sheet hangs in full view and is reviewed in the morning huddle and at the beginning of every staff meeting. It keeps all staff members and the doctor accountable for their promises. Generally, people like to have tasks delegated, and they want to be made responsible for necessary jobs. If people sign their names to something, it is far less likely that they want the rest of the group to think they did not follow through. If an item passes a due date, the staff should discuss the reason and re-commit to another completion date. This is a simple, excellent way to stop procrastination and begin to see results on the part of everyone.

Webster defines accountability as “an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or account for one’s actions.” People naturally want to know what they are responsible for, and, when they know, they have no problem being accountable for tasks. A good leader will recognize a job done well and lead by example.

## Problem Solving And Decision Making

The leader should encourage the staff to come to the meetings prepared with a solution to any problem. When reporting their topic, at times the member will only be concerned about the problem and will spend little or no time on the solution. This is the perfect time to express oneself and encourage others to participate and be heard. Problem solving can be an entire team effort if the elements of teamwork are followed:

- **Participation.** All members of the team actively contribute to the team effort.
- **Give and Take.** Everyone remains flexible and open to alternative points of view, willing to bend to achieve resolution rather than being “right.”
- **Organization.** Each person knows their responsibilities and is actively doing their own job interfacing with each person on the team.
- **Capability of Members.** Each member is qualified and capable to do a job which initiates confidence from other members who can rely on the performance.
- **Commitment to Team Goal.** Team goals are closely defined and the entire team can rally to achieve them.

The decision-making process is left up to the leader, after considering the different solutions from the team. Most importantly, staff members look to the doctor to follow through and take action. They play “follow the leader.” The most frequent complaint is that the doctor or manager drops the ball. The staff ends up invalidated and the discussion was a waste of time. If the Promise and Source Sheet is used, the entire team can reap results.

In conclusion, a good delegator and leader is not necessarily the problem solver, but in most cases, he/she is the final decision-maker. That makes the team want to follow the leader. Z



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