



MEETING ETTIQUETTE POLICY
UTHUKELA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
2026/27

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Corporate Policy: Professional Meeting Standards

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a culture of high-impact collaboration by defining professional standards for all business gatherings. This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and external partners attending company-hosted meetings, whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid.

2. PRE-MEETING PROTOCOLS

- **Defined Objectives:** Every meeting must have a clear, measurable purpose. If the goal can be achieved via email or instant messaging, the meeting should not be scheduled.
- **Agenda Requirements:** Meeting organisers must distribute a timed agenda and any pre-reading materials at least **24 hours** in advance.
- **Mandatory Preparation:** Participants are expected to review all shared documentation before the meeting start time to ensure discussions remain high-level.
- **Selective Attendance:** Only essential personnel required for decision-making or specific input should be invited to maintain efficiency.

3. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT STANDARDS

- **Punctuality:** Attendees must arrive or sign in **2–5 minutes early**. Meetings will start and end exactly at the scheduled time, regardless of whether all participants are present.

- **Focused Engagement:** Multitasking is strictly prohibited.
 - **In-Person:** Phones should be silenced and kept out of sight unless required for the meeting.
 - **Virtual:** Microphones must remain on mute when not speaking to eliminate background noise.
- **Communication Etiquette:**
 - Wait for the chairperson to acknowledge you before speaking.
 - Be concise; speak to the point and avoid repeating previously stated arguments.
 - Challenge ideas, not individuals. Maintain a professional, solution-oriented tone at all times.
- **Non-Verbal Professionalism:** Maintain upright posture and, in virtual settings, keep cameras enabled to foster engagement.

4. POST-MEETING ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Documentation:** The meeting leader or a designated note-taker must distribute formal **Meeting Minutes** within **24–48 hours**.
- **Action Items:** All decisions and tasks must be recorded with a designated **owner** and a specific **deadline**.
- **Facility Care:** For physical meetings, attendees are responsible for leaving the room tidy, clearing all personal items, and pushing in chairs.

5. ENFORCEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Adherence to this policy is essential for operational efficiency and professional respect.

- **Monitoring:** Team leads and chairpersons are responsible for immediate corrective action during meetings (e.g., addressing interruptions or off-topic tangents).
 - **Recurring Deviations:** Consistent failure to follow preparation or punctuality protocols will be noted in performance reviews.
 - **Serious Breaches:** Major violations, such as disrespectful conduct or repeated unexcused absences from mandatory meetings, may result in formal disciplinary action
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6. EXECUTIVE BOARD & LEADERSHIP PROTOCOL

This section defines additional expectations for high-stakes gatherings, such as Board of Directors, Executive Committee (EXCO), or strategic planning sessions.

6.1. Strategic Focus & Governance

- **Operational vs. Strategic:** Discussions must remain at a governance level. Avoid diving into operational "weeds" unless they directly impact strategic outcomes.
- **Board Pack Maturity:** Detailed board packs (financials, strategy docs, committee reports) must be distributed at least **5–7 days** in advance. Reading these materials *during* the meeting is considered a failure of preparation.
- **Quorum & Legal Validity:** A meeting may not commence or pass resolutions without a verified quorum as defined by company bylaws

6.2. Communication & Presence

- **The "One Voice" Principle:** While robust dissent and "healthy contest" are encouraged during debate, all members must publicly support and uphold the final decision once a vote is cast.
- **Directing Comments:** All remarks should be directed to the **Chairperson**. Wait to be formally recognized before speaking to prevent cross-talk and maintain order.
- **Executive Presence:** Maintain composure and "calm authority" during high-pressure moments. Avoid emotional reactions; focus on data-informed insights and strategic trade-offs.

6.3. Confidentiality & Conflicts of Interest

- **Strict Confidentiality:** Board discussions and executive session content are strictly confidential. Sharing "board business" in social settings or with unauthorized staff is a serious breach of fiduciary duty.
- **Conflict Declaration:** Participants must disclose any personal financial or professional interest in a matter *before* it is discussed and, if required, recuse themselves from both the discussion and the vote.

6.4. Executive Sessions (Closed-Door)

Standard Practice: To avoid creating "unwarranted paranoia," every board meeting should include a scheduled slot for an **Executive Session** where only independent directors are present to discuss sensitive matters like CEO performance or litigation.

7. CHAIRPERSON'S GUIDE: SCRIPTS & INTERVENTION TACTICS

7.1 Redirecting Off-Topic Discussions (The "Parking Lot")

When an executive begins a deep dive into an unrelated topic, acknowledge the value but protect the agenda.

7.2 Handling Constant Interrupters

Stop interruptions immediately to maintain the "one voice at a time" rule.

7.3 Managing Dominant Voices

If one person is monopolising the airtime, pivot to include others.

7.4 Ending "Circular" Debates

When the team is repeating arguments without moving toward a decision.

7.5 Addressing Side Conversations

Side-barring is distracting and undermines the speaker.

7.6 Enforcing Punctuality (The "Hard Start")

Don't penalise those who arrived on time by waiting for latecomers.

8. QUICK CHAIRPERSON CHECKLIST

- 1. Introduce the 'Why':** Briefly state the meeting's goal before the first agenda item.
- 2. Assign a Scribe:** Never chair *and* take minutes; it diminishes your ability to lead.
- 3. Active Summarising:** Every 15 minutes, summarise the decisions made to ensure alignment.
- 4. Confirm Actions:** Before adjourning, read back the **Action Item List** (Owner + Deadline).

9. VOTING PROCEDURES & DECISION-MAKING

This section outlines the formal steps for moving from discussion to a binding resolution.

9.1. The Lifecycle of a Motion

All formal decisions must follow a structured process to ensure they are documented and legally sound:

1. **Proposal:** A member makes a motion ("I move that we..."). Proposals should be stated in positive terms to avoid unclear "no" votes.
2. **Seconding:** Another member must "second" the motion to show it has at least two people's interest.
3. **Discussion:** The Chairperson opens the floor for debate. Only one motion may be discussed at a time.
4. **The Call to Vote:** When discussion is exhausted, the Chairperson asks, "Are you ready for the question?"

9.2. Approved Voting Methods

The Chairperson determines the method based on the sensitivity of the topic:

- **Unanimous Consent:** For non-controversial items (e.g., approving minutes), the Chair asks if there are any objections. If none, the motion passes.
- **Voice Vote ("Viva Voce"):** Members say "Aye" or "Nay." This is the fastest method for routine business.
- **Show of Hands:** Ideal for medium-sized groups to get a clear visual count.
- **Secret Ballot:** Used for sensitive matters (e.g., personnel changes) to ensure privacy and reduce peer pressure.
- **Electronic/Digital Voting:** Mandatory for hybrid meetings to ensure remote attendees have equal standing.

9.3. Voting Thresholds & Ties


- **Quorum Requirement:** No vote is valid unless a quorum (typically a majority of voting members) is present at the time of the vote.
- **Simple Majority:** Most resolutions pass with more than 50% of the votes cast.
- **Super-Majority (Two-Thirds/Three-Quarters):** Required for significant changes, such as altering company bylaws or removing a director.
- **Tie-Breaker:** In the event of a tie, the Chairperson usually has a "casting vote" to break the deadlock, depending on the company's

9.4. Documentation in Minutes

The Secretary must record:

- The exact wording of the motion.
- The names of the proposer and seconder.
- The outcome: "Carried," "Failed," or "Tabled" (postponed).
- The numerical tally (e.g., 5-2 with 1 abstention), though individual names are typically only recorded for "Roll Call" votes.

10. APPROVED BY:

NAME	SIGNATURE	DESIGNATION	DATE
MR SB SIBISI		ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	29/05/2026

