



# Setting Priorities

## Objectives:

- ✓ Demonstrate skills in utilizing four techniques for setting priorities: brainstorming, 100 votes, multivoting, and nominal group techniques.
- ✓ Identify appropriate uses for each of the four techniques for setting priorities.

## Advance Preparation:

- ✓ Review lesson plan.
- ✓ Duplicate handouts and worksheet of role play topics.
- ✓ Review handouts, Power Point slides and slide notes for presentation.
- ✓ Prepare overhead transparencies if not using Power Point program.

## Materials Needed:

- ✓ Handouts duplicated for each participant:
  - ["Brainstorming"](#)
  - ["100 Votes"](#)
  - ["Multivoting"](#)
  - ["Nominal Group Technique"](#)
- ✓ Duplicate one workshop for each group of 6-10 persons:
  - ["It's Your Turn - Role Play Topics for Setting Priorities"](#)
- ✓ [PowerPoint: "Skilled Group Leader" slides 29-34](#) and notes pages

## Time Needed:

- ✓ Preparation: 1.5 - 2 hours
- ✓ Presentation: 1 - 1.5 hours

## BACKGROUND

A major role of the County Advisory Council is to set program priorities and guide the staff in identifying the most important needs to be addressed in the plan of work.

Three techniques are frequently used to help groups determine priorities as a part of the decision-making process in a variety of settings. Brainstorming is the foundation for each of the three that will be described below. It provides the means for groups to generate a lot of ideas in a short period of time and encourages creativity as a part of the process. Three processes for narrowing the ideas into manageable numbers and allowing groups to seek additional information before final decisions or choices are made will be shared via techniques of 100 Votes, Multivoting, and Nominal Group Technique.

These three techniques are frequently used in strategic planning groups, futuring committees and organizations, councils and boards which must set priorities for activities and initiatives.

*For additional background information review the handouts, slide notes, lesson plan and instructor's comments integrated into the lesson.*

## INTEREST APPROACH

- Announce to the group you have wonderful news. The County Extension Service has received a gift from a wealthy "friend of Extension" for the purchase of a new vehicle for every Advisory Council member. The only hitch is you must all purchase the same vehicle.
- Ask the group to identify all the decisions that must be made:
  - ✓ What kind of vehicle - SUV? Sedan? Farm equipment (tractor)? Sports Car?, etc.
  - ✓ What options? Leather? Automatic Transmission? CD Player, etc.?
  - ✓ Who - Council members present? Ex. Officio members? The County Extension Agent?
- Discuss ways you could make the decision, i.e., voting, one person decides, committee, etc.
- Share the sad news (they probably figured it out) that alas, there is no wealthy friend of Extension, but the reality is we often find ourselves in situations where we have to make choices or set priorities for a group. If we understand and use priority setting tools, we will be able to have greater input and, ultimately, make better decisions.

## LESSON

- Use the PowerPoint "Skilled Group Leader" slides 29-34 and the corresponding notes pages to guide the presentation.

## I. SETTING PRIORITIES

**SLIDE #29 - 3 Techniques for Setting Priorities** (See slide notes.)

**Instructor's Comment:** *All three techniques for setting priorities begin with **Brainstorming** so this technique will be discussed first.*

### A. BRAINSTORMING

**Distribute and Summarize Handout: "Brainstorming"**

**SLIDE #30 - Guidelines for Conducting the Brainstorming Activity.** (See slide notes.)

### B. 100 VOTES

**Distribute and Summarize Handout: "100 VOTES"** (See slide notes.)

**SLIDE #31 - Guidelines for Conducting the 100 Votes Activity.** (See slide notes.)

### C. MULTIVOTING

**Distribute and Summarize Handout: "Multivoting"**

**SLIDE # 32 - Guidelines for Conducting the Multivoting Activity** (See slide notes.)

### D. NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

**Distribute and Summarize Handout: "Nominal Group Technique"**

**SLIDE #33 & #34 - Guidelines for Conducting the Nominal Group Technique Activity**

- E. **Discuss the Process:** Review with participants the process, ease of use, types of priority setting where the method would work, success in setting priorities with their assigned situation and method.

## APPLICATION

**Group Activity - Distribute Worksheet :**  
***"It's Your Turn - Role Play Topics For Setting Priorities"***

Divide into groups of 6-10 persons. Assign each group a technique for setting priorities: 100 Votes; Multivoting; or Nominal Group Technique. Using the assigned technique, each group works through the process of setting priorities for the situations.

## REFERENCES

Pfeiffer, J. William and Jones, John E., Editors. *Structured Experiences Kit*. San Diego, CA: University Associates, 1985.

Forest, Laverne B., *Working With Our Publics: Module 4, Situational Analysis*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service and the Department of Adult and Community College Education, North Carolina State University, 1988.

Butler, Ava S. *The Trainer's Guide to Running Effective Team Meetings*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Adapted from Delbecq, A.L., Van de Ven, A.H. and Gustafson, D.H. *Group Techniques for Program Planning: A Guide to Nominal Group and Delphi Processes*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Company, 1975.

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