

BEST PRACTICES: REGIONAL USER GROUP MEETING

Follow these guidelines to ensure a successful user group meeting and build your group's long-term success with high attendance, regular membership, and productive meetings.

PLANNING THE MEETING

Pick an optimal room setup – Choose a room layout that fits your group. A conference table or U-shaped layout facilitates conversation in small groups whereas separate tables and chairs encourage interaction in bigger groups.

Include topical breakouts – Have smaller breakouts so people can discuss their top interests.

Request a test site – If you want to explore the latest version in your meeting, schedule an upgrade to get access to a test site (and let the Upgrade Team know you're just playing with the new version). Remember to cancel or reschedule your upgrade after the meeting.

FACILITATING THE MEETING

Kick off with introductions - Ask people to introduce themselves and share *the one thing they want to leave with*. (Hint: write these down, so you can bring them up in the meeting.) Having thorough introductions will jumpstart networking, peer learning, and planning the next meeting.

Ask for “experiences,” not “best practices” - Emphasize the value in learning about how different people, organizations, and industries handle situations. Plus, people are less intimidated if they're asked to share their “experiences,” instead of their “best practices.”

Focus on productive meetings - Cultivate an honest, positive culture focused on helping everyone be more successful. This will keep them coming back.

Get your hands dirty - Don't just talk about the product; pull up the test site or show your site's end-user pages, workspaces, reports, etc.

Plan the next meeting - At the end of the meeting, plan your next user group meeting together (Hint: Finalize as many details as possible.) This collaboration builds ownership, streamlines planning, and ensures meetings reflect the diverse interests and experiences of your group.

Encourage members to present at the next meeting - Don't just ask for volunteer presenters. Instead, show interest in attendees' experiences and then ask if they would *share* more in the next meeting. De-emphasize the presentation since the focus is learning, not Toast Masters.

Share sponsoring - Sharing ownership ensures regular meetings and prevents leader burnout.

COMMUNICATING BETWEEN MEETINGS

Use your regional group - Join your group in the RightNow Community to interact with members, post presentations, and recruit new members.

Manage member lists - Use the list of registrants to contact user group members about upcoming meetings and solicit agenda suggestions. Please respect members' privacy by not using or sharing their contact information without their permission.