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# Tips for Meeting With Management

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- 1. You are an equal.** Act as an equal! A grievance meeting should be a meeting between two parties on equal footing. Remember the Equality Principle: When you are acting as a steward, you have the right to speak freely with management, defend the rights of your members, and uphold your contract. You may have to command respect and actively assert your right to be treated as an equal.
- 2. Remember your goal.** You are striving to settle the grievance at the lowest level possible. Start out by assuming you have a chance to convince everyone involved that it would be best to resolve the issue quickly. At early stages, try to avoid backing management into a corner or putting them on the defensive. Leave them an “out” if possible, so that they can save face and have room to cooperate in negotiating a settlement with you.
- 3. Stick to the point.** Take charge of the meeting and stick to your plan of attack to the extent you can. If a supervisor wants to shift the discussion to unrelated issues, insist that you return to the grievance at hand.
- 4. Maintain a united front.** Avoid ever having an argument among union people in the presence of management. Call a recess if needed. Make sure management knows that union membership is united behind the grievance.
- 5. Take notes.** Record what management says. This may help you better identify their concerns and provide you with an opportunity to address them while still advocating for your desired remedy at a later point in the grievance process.
- 6. Repeat your best arguments and facts.** Don't let management derail you or bait you into a defensive position on weaker aspects of your case. If you get off track, return to your best arguments. It's ok and, in fact, usually effective to repeat yourself.
- 7. Disagree with dignity.** Avoid getting excited, angry, or hostile. On rare occasions, planned and strategically timed demonstrations of emotion might be useful to make a point. But usually, losing your cool means you have lost control of the meeting.
- 8. Be ready to end or suspend the meeting.** If unexpected information (from the grievant or the supervisor) crops up during the meeting, call a caucus to discuss it with the grievant or collect your thoughts and strategize! If the information radically alters the case, ask to postpone the meeting so you can better prepare.