

URGENT MESSAGE: BLACK AGENDA NEEDED

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor
Wednesday, 27 February 2013 00:00



You know, I've participated in a lot of meetings and events over the years and the one thing that I've seen that can make or break them both, is the agenda; or lack of one.

I've been to countless meetings and events that have flowed so smoothly, having minimal hiccups, simply because someone took the time to develop a solid agenda that was followed. Subsequently, I have also been witness to meetings and events that have gone horribly wrong, simply because an agenda was not properly developed or followed.

According to Merriam-Webster, an agenda is a list or outline of things to be considered or done. An agenda lists the meeting or event activities in the order in which they will be presented from beginning to end. The objectives of an agenda include familiarizing participants and attendees with the topics or presentations that will be discussed and any issues that will be raised; along with indicating what outcome the participants may expect from the meeting.

The difference between meetings and events, with and without agendas, can mean the difference between success and chaos. Having meetings and events without an agenda can lead to arguments, emotional responses, few accomplishments, lack of productivity and a waste of everyone's time.

An agenda should always be developed in order to effectively communicate to each participant that the meeting or event will be conducted in an orderly fashion and that productivity is the goal. An agenda can ensure that the meeting or event stays on track and that special projects and routine operations proceed as intended. An agenda can help a group of people function as an effective team.

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It is time for Black folks to have an agenda.

No....no.....Correction! It is time for Black folks to have an agenda that we all agree with and one that we all will follow in order to get things done.

See....acceptance of an agenda by all participants, in advance of a meeting or event, becomes an agreement by all participants as to how the meeting or event will be conducted and what issues will be discussed. Because there is a true agenda in place, everyone who is involved as participants have a greater sense of understanding and control of the outcomes, as long as everyone knows what the goals and objectives are.

When putting together a sound agenda, one has to take many things into consideration. Many of the things that contribute towards having an effective agenda include knowing: who the participants or speakers are; what the goals and objectives are; who has what roles and responsibilities; and most importantly, how much time are you working with.

Truth be told, most Black people don't know what their goals and objectives are as a collective group of people. We are more reactive than we are proactive, which causes us problem after problem.

For example, if President Obama came and landed Air Force One down in a Black neighborhood and asked everyone in the neighborhood what they wanted, most Black folks would be speechless. Others would simply be asking for money, a hook-up in some way or some material possession. More importantly, if President Obama asked everyone in the neighborhood what he could do for them that didn't involve giving them cash, a hook-up or some material possessions, most Black folks wouldn't know what to ask for.

We often hear people ask the question, "What is the Black agenda?" I see that Blacks have forums, workshops, seminars, summits, consortiums, town-hall meetings, etc. but even after those meetings and events are held, things don't appear to get any better for us collectively.

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If I am wrong, somebody please tell me then, “What is the Black agenda and how do we know that we are accomplishing anything on the agenda?”

Truth be told I don't believe we really have a Black agenda. I believe what we have are a bunch of individuals who have been anointed as leaders or have inherited titles that indicate surface leadership. However, they come to speak and meet, but have no answers and no long-term, sustainable solutions that can be measured.

Collectively, Black people have been under the mental control of their oppressors for so long, that maybe we need to start asking ourselves if we have become a people who have grown accustomed to being told where to go and what to do as mental slaves. Have the generations of oppression helped us to inherit a mindset of oppression and avoid making plans of action or developing an effective agenda with realistic goals and objectives for our future?

I'm sure you've heard the saying, “if you fool me once shame on you, but if you fool me twice shame on me.” Somebody please tell me how much shame Black people are going to have to continuously endure before we wake up and realize that enough is enough.

Jeffrey L. Boney is Associate Editor for the Houston Forward Times newspaper, a Next Generation Project Fellow and a dynamic, international speaker. Jeffrey is the Founder and CEO of the Texas Business Alliance and is an experienced entrepreneur and business development strategist. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at jboney1@texasbusinessalliance.org.