***Communicating the concept of “lean”; makING its way into one’s council***

The organization I am an employee of has undertaken for the past four years the huge task of eliminating the excess or unnecessary processes in departments and when the trimming is over, to have a process that will be even more effective and produce very rewarding results. This same concept or rule of practice can hold true whether it is in a board room, in a work room, in one’s own living room or, even, in our own council meeting room; lean being replaced by “less.”

When approaching women in their interest to continue on in pursuing an office within their council, whether it is at the parish, deanery and now the Diocesan level, one of the very first questions asked of me is - how many meetings are involved? I have heard this question over multiple, multiple times. We have to keep in mind that as busy as lives can be it is the adding in of external projects and/or events outside the home where leaning ends up taking place in order to keep more of a balance to everything. So, when the golden question is asked of how can we recruit not necessarily young people but new people, council meetings is one such place where leaning can step in to be very effective and very helpful.

In structuring your meetings, one thing to keep in mind is it is not the number of meetings being held yearly with your board or with your general council but it is the substance of the meeting that is so very important. Doing that part correctly will ensure the return of those members back to the next meeting. So, a very simple process to follow is to look at the meeting ladder of the council of Catholic women’s organization. That is an excellent starting place.

At the Diocesan level, four meetings are held every year; following in line with that, four meetings then would be held at one’s Deanery level. If a situation arises needing the attention of the board, such as a special vote, the Deanery President does an email blast to her immediate board; thus, by emailing, it eliminates another meeting – a very simple, effective and “lean” piece. At each parish level, meeting times and dates will be different, dependent on the activities your parish women are involved in; the structure of your parish bylaws, etc. Always remember it is not the necessity to always have a meeting just to have a meeting but, more so, to make it a meeting worthy of everyone’s time. If one would step back and take a long moment to look down the road at future recruiting that will be taking place, with certainty; are your meetings of a good number and definable, to welcome in potential officers when they ask, “how many meetings are we talking about,”; will they like the answer they are given or do the meetings need a little leaning so that the steps taken by tomorrow’s leaders are forward and never backwards.

The lean statement I wish to communicate to you in this report is: Meetings are an important and very significant topic when it comes to recruiting.

[Saint Bernadine of Siena](http://catholicsaints.info/saint-bernadine-of-siena/) – Saint of advertising, communications and public relations work.

Lu Miller, **Chair of Public Relations/Communications; Chair of Nominations Committee**

**October 2017**