

Russell's roolz for reps

Some sagely advice from an experienced rep.

1. Read **all** the papers for at least your first meeting and tag the relevant bits.
2. Focus on two or three items per meeting – don't spread yourself too thin, and don't try to do the experts work for them.
3. Have an overall objective on each committee and decide whether it is process or outcome related.
4. Admit "I don't know" and ask ingenuous questions when appropriate (and don't be surprised to find out that other supposedly expert member of the committee don't always know either).
5. Remember the basic consumer rights to look for in any procedure likely to be inflicted upon us:
 - ◆ information
 - ◆ choice
 - ◆ safety
 - ◆ redress, and
 - ◆ a healthy environment.
6. Vary your attitude by:
 - ◆ starting with a healthy cynicism,
 - ◆ defuse situations with humour,
 - ◆ comprise where necessary; and
 - ◆ employ strategic anger as a weapon (rarely).
7. Don't see the committee as an end in itself.
8. Just having a consumer that at committee meetings makes health service providers and planners behave differently.
9. Don't undervalue your expertise or representational power.
10. Remember: there are more of us than there are of them!

