

Less Time, More Impact

Suggestions for Surviving in Organizations

How to Make it Happen (part 1)

You have a great idea for a program or event. But, how do you make sure all the bases are covered to ensure success? The next two issues of Less Time...More Impact will focus on various aspects of planning and conducting programs or events.

These are ten components that are critical to planning and conducting activities.

- 1) Establish Structure and Organization
- 2) Define Purpose
- 3) Identify Audiences
- 4) Design the Core Activities
- 5) Plan Supportive Arrangements
- 6) Establish Balance with the Total Program
- 7) Involve Program Support and Resources
- 8) Include Fun
- 9) Consider Promotion and Image
- 10) Remember Evaluation, Impact, and Results

Less Time, More Impact

*An Oconto County University
Extension Leadership
Development Fact Sheet*

Written by Donna Doll-Yogerst,
Family Living Agent,
Oconto Co, UW-Extension

As you go through each section there is a series of questions to answer. If any of the following questions are not answered "YES" for the activity you're planning, decide what actions, if any, are needed.

Component One: Structure and Organization

Keep a master copy of all correspondence, programs, evaluations, and meeting minutes related to the activity. Place them in a notebook or file. (This can be a personal reference for the activity leader or coordinator to keep or to pass on to a new leader.)

Establish your program planning committee. Work with your organizations. The executive group needs to be represented on the activity committee so it stays informed.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Can the planning committee work together as a team to share the workload?
- 2) Are decisions recorded?
- 3) Are program materials organized and maintained?

Component Two: Purpose

Prepare a short written purpose for this activity and review with the group.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Does this activity have a clear purpose?
- 2) Does this activity encourage personal and program growth?
- 3) Are specific and general goals for participants addressed?
- 4) Does this activity build support for our organization and create opportunities?
- 5) Is there a clear need for this activity?

Component Three: Audience

List the specific audiences that can benefit from participation in this activity.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Is the activity appropriate for the intended audiences?
- 2) Is cost of participation affordable and clearly explained?
- 3) Do participants have enough knowledge and preparation to have a successful experience?
- 4) Will the activity stir interest in the community and have the potential for expanding membership in your organization?

Component Four: Design the Core Activities

Now that you know your purpose and audience, it is time to develop the activities that you will rely on as the key ways of achieving your purpose. Which kinds of activities will work best for your audience?

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What educational and social/recreational activities may be appropriate and effective?
- 2) Does the schedule provide variety, adequate time, and consider participant attention span?
- 3) Is each activity clearly described so participants clearly understand what to expect?
- 4) Does the schedule and length of activity accommodate the targeted audience (parent work schedule, school hours, etc.)?
- 5) Is childcare planned? (if appropriate)
- 6) Do the facilities lend themselves to a variety of teaching methods (space for activity, movable chairs, good lighting, etc.)?
- 7) Is the location well known or well described?
- 8) Do the facilities accommodate people with physical disabilities?
- 9) Are job/task descriptions available for resource people and others assisting with the activity?
- 10) Have arrangements been made for security, insurance, and safety of participants?

Component Five: Plan Supportive Arrangements

The success of your program depends on how all the elements of an activity, location, facility, timing, and so forth fit together, compliment each other, and meet the needs of your participants. Planning ahead and then making needed adjustments during the program are keys.

Component Six: Establish Balance with the Total Program

Every activity can enhance the total program and reach out to the broader community. Keep records of participation for yearly comparison and to permit follow up contacts. Contact a sample of those for whom the activity was specifically offered, but who did not attend. Ask if they were aware of the activity and what circumstances or conflicts kept them from attending.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Does this activity support the organizational objectives?
- 2) Do people participate readily and show enthusiasm for this activity?
- 3) Does this activity show growth or growth potential?
- 4) Have other groups planning events and projects, with related subjects, been consulted to avoid duplication or to combine efforts?
- 5) Does this activity use a "fair share" of the organization's resources for the number of participants?

*****Components 7-10 are covered in part 2*****