Planning Large Programs

Key: DON'T RUSH! Give yourself plenty of time to plan a big program. Planning should begin **at least** two months before your purchase order submission deadline (which generally adds another month)!

Program Goal

❑ What is your SOCO – single overriding communication objective? What is the main thing you want the audience to learn or do as a result of attending your event?
Join your organization; Increase awareness of an issue; Share information with friends and family; change their behavior?

❑ Determine who your target population is for this activity.
Members only, All students, Adults, Civic leaders, Entire community?

❑ How will your SOCO, your key message, be communicated to your audience? THIS SHOULD REMAIN YOUR PRIMARY FOCUS THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS. **To get the message across, remember to match to audience educational level, interests, age, etc.**
Speaker on the topic; signage containing the message; video screens with message; promotional items with message; interactive displays and activities

Brain Storm

When developing an idea for your event, ask yourself several questions and then brain storm the answers. Questions to ask include: *What is this audience interested in? What kind of event will they attend? What will capture their attention? How will we achieve our SOCO (e.g. get the message out) at this kind of the event?*
Get input from a lot of people in the organization **and in the target group**. Come up with a lot of ideas; no ideas are bad here. Quantity NOT quality is important in this stage. Dream big – you can scale back to reality when you select your ideas. You may use ideas that other groups have had success with in the past as a starting point, but don't limit yourself to these ideas.

Select the Winning Idea

After brainstorming, select your winning idea by determining which idea will:
1) best achieve your SOCO; 2) draw the correct target audience; 3) be possible given your resources and budget.

Written Plan

Based upon the event type you selected, develop a written program plan which includes:
1. Your SOCO in written form – always refer back to this to make sure you are on track.
2. Methods for communicating your message
3. Date & time
2. Location/facilities
3. Budget/estimated costs – (check prices)
4. Equipment required (include costs if rented)
5. Food
6. Guest Speaker/Entertainment (make tentative arrangements)
7. Publicity plan (see publicity section of this document)
8. Clean-up crew or arrangements
* Be sure to check school / organizational / community calendars for conflicting events, and check facilities & equipment for availability.
   You may want to consider co-sponsorship with another organization if event cost is high or if desired for other reasons, but <u>be sure that the co-sponsor's message is compatible with your own message so your SOCO will not be not distorted or misrepresented</u>

Submit Plan for Approval / Suggestions

Get input (and approval if required) from supervisors, advisors, school administration, and anyone else who can provide helpful feedback or who's approval will be required in order for the event to happen.

Re-evaluation

Analyze your written plan. Ask the following questions:
Will it allow you to accomplish your goal? Will this adequately convey the SOCO? Can this event be accomplished given the time, manpower, budget and resources available?

Refine and Finalize

Use information gained in the previous two stages to refine your program.
The big plan is now complete!

Pre-Implementation

1) Confirm arrangements with speaker / entertainment
2) **Submit purchase orders**
3) Reserve facilities & equipment (consider a rain facility or alternate date if event is outside)
4) Print & distribute accurate publicity and other advertising
5) Establish committees to handle arrangements (set-up, clean-up, etc.)
6) Develop an evaluation and a distribution / collection method to access program effectiveness (SOCO)

Implementation - follow the plan

1) Set-up facility EARLY
2) Pick-up food, drinks, ice cooler, etc.
3) Check all equipment as soon as possible.
4) An <u>additional</u> last minute publicity blitz
   (school announcements, radio ads, flyers, balloons, door-to-door), if possible, can't hurt.
5) Give out & collect participant evaluations.
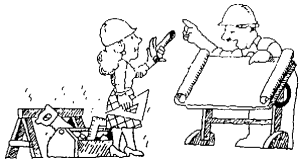
Post-Implementation

1) Take down program publicity.

2) Give thank-you letters to speakers and others who assisted with the program, including student volunteers (set-up, clean-up crew, etc.).

3) Evaluate the program thoroughly. Be sure to:

   a) Review participant evaluations
   b) Have program planners should evaluate the program.
   c) Include recommendations for improvement.

4) Create an event file folder for this program which includes - program plan, evaluation, publicity, contact numbers and names, donations, budget, vendor info and any other relevant material.

5) Add this event folder to your programming files.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A PROGRAM FILE - START ONE NOW!

6) Congratulate yourself for a job well done!
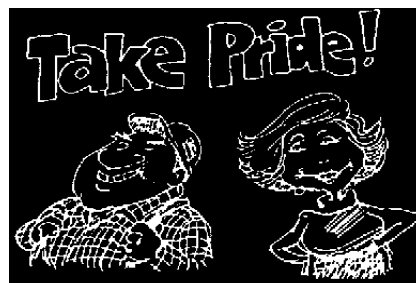
Publicity

Publicity is a vital part of successful programming. It is very discouraging, not to mention wasteful of resources, to put lots of time, money and effort into a program which no one attends. In order to avoid this situation it is essential that you develop good promotional materials and implement them at appropriate times.

All publicity should include:

WHAT:	Name and description of the event
WHEN:	Day, date, and time
WHERE:	Exact location - include map if necessary
WHO:	Name of sponsoring organization, guest speaker/entertainment, and who can attend
COST/REQUIRMENTS:	Admission cost, anything that participants must provide themselves

Multi-media time table:

For large events, a multi-media publicity approach can be very effective. Spacing out the introduction of media types can keep the program fresh in people's minds. The following is an example of such an approach:

2 Weeks Prior	Posters/flyers & Radio announcements
1 Week Prior	Table tents & Newspaper Ads
3 Days Prior	Banners & Giveaways (printed cups, pencils, etc.)
2 Days Prior	Buttons & Sandwich boards
1 Day/Day of	Balloons & Wear Printed T- Shirts & School Announcements

DAY AFTER - REMOVE ALL POSTED PUBLICITY

Hints for printed Publicity:
- Clear and simple design
- Use a logo
- Catchy name - use alliteration - "SWAT Super Saturday Showdown"
- Colorful
- Eye catching

Multi-media Publicity Ideas:

A-Boards	Jingles (song)
Airplane flyers	Lamppost banners
Announcements	Mail letters
Balloons	Marquis
Body paint	Newspapers
Buttons	Painting windows
Bill boards	Plane w/ banner
Cafeteria tray liners	Sandwich boards
Chalk on sidewalk	Singing minstrel
Calendars (or date stickers)	Table tents
Flagpole	T-shirts
Give always	Toilet paper writing
Hats	Teasers - performances
Invitations	Vending machines