

## PUTTING PIZAZZ INTO YOUR ORGANIZATION

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Have you ever wanted to...

- add some humor to each meeting?
- have each committee present an educational idea?
- provide some type of special recognition for members?
- have members looking forward to the next meeting, wondering what will happen next?
- have a theme to focus on each time?
- add some "sparks" to the meeting?

...but never got around to it!!

This program topic provides some ideas for putting sparkle into meetings and making meeting attendance a highlight instead of a "ho-hum" affair, by:

- helping members evaluate meetings,
- developing a meeting plan, and
- considering ideas for adding pizzazz to the organization.

### Do We Need Pizazz?

How is our group doing? Every leader and organization needs to ask this question periodically. To be effective, you need to ask the question and seek answers in a variety of ways. Talk to members informally and try to see how they feel about the group and its meetings. Seek answers to the following questions:

- \* Are our meetings planned or do they just happen?
- \* Are all members equally interested in the meeting/s? How can we maintain interest in what we are doing?

- \* Are our leaders well prepared?
- \* Do members learn something?
- \* Does the group feel united by a common purpose?
- \* Is the general atmosphere of the group:
  - formal or informal;
  - permissive or inhibited;
  - cooperative or competitive;
  - friendly or hostile?
- \* Does everyone participate? Are contributions accepted?
- \* Are the meetings fun? valuable? worth the time?
- \* Does the group do any "special" activities?
- \* What one word do members use to describe the group's current meetings?

The answers to the above questions may surprise you. But, don't take offense if there are negative responses. Use this exercise as the beginning point for putting pizzazz into your organization.

### Planning the Pizazz

Planning is essential for a group's success. A well-thought-through plan can serve as a guide or road map for the year.

Involve members in planning. Get ideas from officers, committee chairpersons, program leaders, hostesses, and others who might have creative skills, talents, or suggestions to offer.

Plan what you are going to do each month. Make an outline and list what needs to be done and who will do it. Outline the plan by the months of the year. Remember:

- Brainstorm and dream. The ideas will come.
- Talk and plan with the total group.

- If you believe it, you can achieve it.
- Assign roles. "If it is to be, it is up to me."  
Get everyone involved.
- Officers and chairmen are leaders, not servants or generals. Everyone must contribute.

### ***Recipe for Success***

*Take energy and patience and  
mix them well together*

*With plenty of good nature  
that laughs in cloudy weather;*

*Add earnestness of purpose  
in everything you plan;*

*Add much determination to do  
the best you can.*

*Do this with conscientious care,  
and we think you will confess,*

*You've never found a better rule  
for making a success.*

*--Author Unknown*

Keep members informed of what is planned. If you're striving to put pizzazz into the program, stop occasionally and evaluate. Having an overall plan with short-term goals to work toward will help members achieve a sense of accomplishment. Make changes slowly in the program structure and process; see if the changes meet your overall goals and the needs of members.

Seek participation from all members. When everyone is involved, each has a commitment to see the job done better. Try to find something for everyone to do and be sure they are comfortable doing it.

Before each meeting check to be certain everything is ready:

- See who is in charge of each part.
- Get the meeting room or place ready.

- See that a speaker, topic, or special program is prepared.
- Outline the agenda.
- Remind people who are involved.

Good meetings don't just happen! They are carefully thought out, well-executed events that affect the way the organization runs. With a little pizzazz and the following tips you should have successful meetings:

- Start and finish on time.
- Know what you want to say.
- Have your materials organized and ready.
- Follow the KISS rule: keep it short and simple.
- Keep meeting lively and moving forward.
- Speak clearly.
- Be confident and enthusiastic.
- Take a break if meeting runs too long.
- Close on a positive note.
- Make sure everyone understands what has been decided.

### **Perfecting the Pizzazz**

There are endless creative ideas to add sparkle and zing to your organization. A few sparks are shared below, and additional ones may be found in a special "Helps for Organizational Creativity" leaflet available at the extension office. By incorporating some of these ideas, you will be on your way to adding pizzazz your group can use and enjoy in the future.

**Education should be fun.** One of the primary purposes of our organization is education and it need not be dull. Think of ways you can add a "spark" to programs and topics. Some ideas include:

- As soon as you know the topic, start a folder. Put ideas in it until you have to teach.
- Team teach the topic. It's always more fun to do it together and it may help a bashful member.
- Begin the program with game, skit, role-play or some other special activity.
- Relate topic to current event, something from the newspaper, or a local happening.
- Use a poem, story, or anecdote.

- Make wise use of visuals; i.e., video, music, tapes, etc.
- Involve members—show and tell, quizzes, gimmick, etc.
- Invite an outside speaker to teach topic.
- Plan a tour, special activity, etc., to supplement topic.

**Club meetings can be creative.** The most important factor in a good meeting is to have a planned agenda and to follow a time schedule. Designate responsibilities in advance so thought can go into planning.

- ♥ Add variety by changing the order of the meeting's agenda.
- ♥ Have meeting themes based on programs, holidays, or seasons. Carry the theme out in program, decorations, and meditations.
- ♥ Answer roll call differently each month.
- ♥ Coordinate workshops or tours around programs, holidays, or special interests.
- ♥ Involve resource people for other views.
- ♥ Give members something to look forward to each time. Provide a spark of excitement for them to return.
- ♥ Have a 5- to 7-minute demonstration.
- ♥ Ask members to present short readings.
- ♥ Have member present a 3- to 5-minute heritage story.
- ♥ Share tips for homemaking, canning, or some other topic.
- ♥ Use a gimmick such as boxes, apples, strawberries, teddy bears, bags, or dolls to illustrate theme, idea, or special spark.

**Fund raising is a necessary activity for most groups.** Put some pizzazz into fund-raising activities by trying something different, such as:

*Traveling Basket* - (Needed: basket, jar taped with slit top, list of members' names)

The president puts a handmade or baked item in the basket and sends it to the next person on list. Second person puts into the jar the amount of money she/he thinks the gift is worth and keeps the gift; then second person puts in a handmade (or baked) item and passes it along to third person. The basket travels through the entire club and the last person returns basket, gift, list, and money jar to president. A large club may want to have two baskets traveling at the same time.

*Calendar* - A calendar is made with a money-raising idea for each day. Items may include: pay 2 cents for each window in your home; add 5 cents for each child you have, etc. There is a different item and amount each day. Money is placed in a jar and returned to the club treasurer the next month.

*\$1 Game* - Members can keep a dime for each one of the following they name. They give a dime for each one they can't name. The leader should go prepared with some dimes.

There are 10 parts of the body that are three-letter words; name them. Set a time limit.  
(Answers: 1. Jaw, 2. Rib, 3. Arm, 4. Leg, 5. Toe, 6. Hip, 7. Gum, 8. Ear, 9. Eye, 10. Lip)

### **Social Is Important**

About a third of the meeting should focus on social interaction among members. Some ways of adding pizzazz include:

- \* Have club visitations. At the beginning of the year, names are drawn to determine which club will visit a particular club.
- \* Take photographs of members for the club scrapbook and have the book on display at all meetings.
- \* Give short demonstrations; i.e., make an onion mum, tie a bow, make a corn-husk flower or a turnip snowman.

\* Ask several members to bring short poems, readings, or games. Insert them throughout the meeting to add spice and fun at various points.

\* Sharing—limit 5 minutes. Since some members don't want to lead a program, be an officer, or serve on a committee, ask them to share a special skill. Some ideas might include: hooking a rug, sharing a collection, giving a book report, sharing a special recipe, etc.

\* Do something special:

- At Christmas have each person bring a handmade ornament. Members stand in a circle with their ornaments. Someone reads the poem, "The Night Before Christmas." Each time the word "the" is read, each person passes his/her ornament to the person on the right. At the end of the poem, each person keeps the ornament he/she is holding.
- Have a basket of tulip bulbs. Prepare a talk in which membership is discussed. New life in the club is compared to planting a bulb. With the right care a club can bloom beautifully just as a bulb does. Each member selects a bulb to take home to plant.
- Focus on Flag Day in June. The program, decorations, favors, food, and printed handouts can be red, white, and blue, with the American flag being the center of attention.
- Slumber parties aren't just for kids; adults can have a slumber party, too. Try it and then go to a favorite restaurant for breakfast together.

For more ideas, ask your extension agent to share a copy of "Helps for Organizational Creativity."

You may borrow a copy from the Dorsey Resource Center, also.

### **Adding the Pizazz**

As this topic is presented, you'll probably hear some comments such as, "ah-ha" or "why don't we try that?" As a group, decide what you might do to add some pizazz to the remainder of the program year. Make your plan now, following the rules outlined above.

Then, schedule some time at the club's program planning meeting when everyone can be involved in planning the next program year. Don't be afraid to try some new things to create a spark of enthusiasm for your group.

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