



Office of Student Leadership & Service



“Leadership Lifesavers To-Go” Series

Leadership Lifesavers To-Go is an ongoing outreach effort to students at Emory University from the Office of Student Leadership & Service and is a supplement to our ongoing leadership development series. These brief & informative “tid-bits” are intended to serve as guides and are not intended to be all-inclusive.

BEFORE YOU PLAN A PROGRAM...

This guide is specifically intended to compliment the information shared on the Small-Medium Event Planner, and the Large Event Planner.

So, your organization would like to hold a fantastic event? In order to make your event a success, consider some additional steps that we’ve found can make all the difference between whether your event is a memorable success or not.

I. Needs Assessment

This is the process for finding out which programs are wanted, needed, or useful. This can be accomplished by:

1. Listen to what others are saying around you; what interests them?
2. Give students a survey.
3. Have meetings to discuss interest.
4. Put suggestion boxes in student center, lobbies, or mailroom.
5. Have students complete note cards about their hobbies, interests, skills, etc.
6. Ideas for programs may be the result of campus problems.

II. Idea Formulation

Pulling together everyone’s thoughts on what program would fit the needs expressed above. Here are some basic rules of formulating ideas:

1. Evaluation and criticism by group members is **forbidden**.
2. All contributions are to be encouraged; everything counts.
3. Try to generate as many ideas as possible.
4. Group members should try to build upon other’s ideas as much as possible.
5. What haven’t you done before? What is not currently being done, at all?

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During this phase, be sure to have someone write down ideas. Then, begin to evaluate each according to time involved, money involved, supplies needed, scheduling conflicts, and use of resources or facilities.

III. Planning the Program

Figure out what needs to be done and who will do it. Some suggestions:

1. Follow the steps outlined in the Small–Medium scale Event Planner (or Large Scale Event Planner, if necessary). Contact [our office](#) if you need clarification.
2. Use the person who presented the idea.
3. Do not just ask for volunteers, ask students by name if they will take it on.
4. Provide importance to each part of the program.
5. Set up committees with specific responsibilities and timetables.
6. Register your event, if necessary.
7. Be aware of other campus programs to prevent scheduling conflicts.
8. Utilize campus resources as program presenters.
9. Give specific directions when delegating responsibility. Follow up verbal conversations with written emails.
10. Ask your Advisor for help! Advisors can be powerful allies. If you do not need their help, include them in the planning or by sending them updates on the planning.

Process of Setting Up a Program

1. Plan a budget and stick to it!
2. Pick a date that does not conflict with an already scheduled event.
3. Don't try to compete with an event more appealing than your own.
4. Contact campus resources about program format and expected attendance.
5. Plan publicity, send out invitations when appropriate.
6. Be there to greet all special guests.
7. Publicly acknowledge those who helped, **send thank-you notes**.
8. Evaluate the program.

IV. Publicity

In order to have good attendance, it is important to develop good publicity and promotion techniques. Suggestions to keep in mind when promoting events are:

1. On any piece of publicity, make sure to include the answers to these questions:
 - i. WHAT? Name or description of the program.
 - ii. WHEN? Day, date, time.
 - iii. WHERE? Give specific location.
 - iv. WHO? Name of sponsoring group, who can attend.
 - v. HOW MUCH? Admission cost.
2. For on-campus programs, post advertising about 2–5 days before the event.

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3. For off-campus programs, post advertising about 4–7 days before the event. If a guarantee of a certain number of people is needed to cover the cost etc., publicize well in advance and consider compiling an RSVP list.
4. Take down all publicity the day after the event. New publicity will not receive attention if bulletin boards are cluttered with out-of-date material.

Things to remember:

- Ideas should be formulated in advance so there is time to carry them out.
- The use of themes may be helpful in publicizing.
- Get started on publicity early so that people can make plans to attend the program.
- Identify whom you are trying to reach and design promotions to target them.
- Excellent programs require a good deal of advance planning. If your event is not a group effort, it is less likely that your event will succeed.

In designing publicity materials:

- Make it clear and simple.
- Use a logo.
- Use colored paper and different ink
- If you only depend on LearnLink, you will shortchange yourself—cast a wide publicity net!
- Use a creative title or catchy phrase.
- Distribute where students will see it.

V. Motivation

Students should have a genuine desire to attend or participate in the program. Ways to increase interest include:

1. Educate your students about the value of a program to them.
2. Spread your enthusiasm.
3. Reward students for their involvement with the program.
4. Get students involved in the program— planning, working, publicizing.
5. Emphasize what participation can do for the student (leadership, pleasure, etc.)
6. Have students share their progress and successes on a program with volunteers
7. Thank people, individually, for a job well done!

VI. Program Implementation

When putting on the program, here are some important reminders:

1. Prepare the set-up or physical arrangement for the program early.
2. Check out your equipment that you will need early.
3. Be prepared to introduce the program and presenters.

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4. Create a clear-cut opening and closing of the program.
5. **Be ready to “go with the flow.”** Inevitably, something will not go as you’ve planned—make the best of it.

Don’t panic if:

1. The presenter doesn’t show up. Announce to the audience that due to circumstances beyond your control, the speaker is not here. Inform the crowd whether you intended to wait for the speaker to arrive for a specific period of time (also thank them for their patience) or if the event will be postponed until a later date.
2. The audience doesn’t show up. Explain to the presenter that there has been some problem—no interest in the topic, lack of advertising, bad timing. Discuss whether or not to reschedule.

If either situation occurs, evaluate your planning method; you may be misreading the students or being unclear in your plans.

VII. Evaluation

This is one of the most important aspects of the program. Good evaluations will help in future planning. Keep in mind:

1. Encourage honest feedback from participants.
2. Be encouraged by each program. Learn from each one.
3. Look for positive experiences gained by participants.
4. Provide forms for evaluation of programs periodically.
5. Complete a formal program evaluation.
6. The success of your event should **not** be judged on how many people attended! Don’t sell yourself short. Success can be measured once you consider how/if your organization met the goals of the program.

One final note: Be sure to follow the steps in checklists that our office provides. We provide a checklist for Small-Medium sized events, as well as one for Large Scale events.