



BRAINSTORMING MEETING

Growing Planning Teams



Preface: Planning teams are the most effective, when they have new people coming onto the team. Team leadership positions help your event to grow, and for you to share opportunities to learn to lead with members of your community.

Audience: We want to create a fun, interactive event that is inclusive of both the current team and other community leaders or future leaders. Other attendees can include pastors, teachers, business leaders, youth leadership, community based organization leadership, etc. Note: Please be sure to be clear to non-team attendees that there is no expectation of commitment from them, other than attendance, and to share their expertise and knowledge of the people in the community.

Objective: To identify a list of specific people that could serve on the planning team to ensure growth in community engagement.

Preparation: You want your brainstorm meeting to be as successful as possible. Some preparation will help things to move more smoothly. Here are some things to consider:

- Secure a location – If possible try something new.
- Try to include a snack. In the best-case scenario, this will be a social engagement and have some fun for participants. People like to be asked their opinions or for their expertise, try to make this as easy and comfortable as possible.
- Create a specific list of areas of need and want. Example: I need five people on the team recruitment team. I want someone to reach out to businesses for sponsorship. Be sure to consider tasks that would be attractive based on peoples interests and area of expertise. Example: High School Student President to lead recruitment efforts at the High School or Millennial that has an interest in marketing, to lead the marketing effort. Many people want to build their resume or their skillset as a part of volunteering.
- “Wish List” of community influencers – In many communities, you will know who these folks are. They are generally engaged in many activities and can be the “heartbeat” of the community. When you talk to the Chamber or the Community Service organizations, their name will come up as “you should talk to XX.”

Brainstorm Day: The brainstorming exercise should take no longer than 1 hour but could take as little as 30-45 minutes. The Agenda below, will be a good starting point for writing an Agenda that you, and your team can implement.

AGENDA

- Leader Opening – Volunteer leader for the planning team opens the meeting, and thanks everyone for attending and sharing their expertise. Talk about the mission. Share how much of a difference their walk has made in the lives of hungry people around the block and around the world (you might bring a graph of the walk's income history, and then share what the dollars can do in a poor community).

- State the “challenge” – We need more people on our team to grow our walk (if possible also write the challenge on the top of the board).

- Section One – Name Mash-Up – Have small groups (3-4) identify 7-15 names for consideration. If possible, have these small groups stand in front of flip chart and write down names and why. If the size of the people attending the brainstorm session is on 3-4, do a ball toss, asking each person to identify a name, and then the staff person will record the names for discussion.

- Section Two – Who do we know? As the brainstorming “juices” start flowing, ask people to think about who they know in specific areas of the community including the following:

- Community Service Organizations – Kiwanis, Rotary, Boy Scouts, etc.
- Schools (all ages) – Teachers, Administrators or students.
- Corporations and Small Business – Identify your top employers, but also think about your hairdresser/barber, or the person who tutors your kids, your eye doctor, etc.
- Banks – Whether large or small, bank staff are typically engaged in community activities.
- Government – In a small community this may be the mayor, in a larger one, it may be the local parks and recreation director.
- Faith Based – If you haven't yet created a list of churches and synagogues in your community, consider doing it, and asking if anyone knows people that attend faith based groups.

- Section Three – Who will ask? We want 1-2 people to make a phone call or visit these individuals. Optimally, the people calling will have some relationship with them, but if not, identify the person that most closely relates to that individual. Please be specific when speaking to them. Start with the need: We are looking for leaders in the community to help grow our Hunger Walk. Your name has come up as someone that would be a great addition to our team. Be specific: Our initial thoughts were that you would enjoy working on accounting as you are a banker, but we want to be sure there aren't other areas that might be of greater interest to you. The time commitment is XX hours a month, and attendance at the event. End with your call to action: We need you, will you consider serving on the team? Wait for their answer. Many times, when we are nervous about asking someone for help, we fill the empty space in the conversation with additional information. Let the crickets roar. If they say no, offer a lesser role (team captain).

- Closing – Leader to recap all that has been accomplished and let everyone know that the outcomes, and next step actions will be sent out via email after the meeting. The leader will identify a potential deadline for outreach to be made by everyone (2 weeks) and ask that the group celebrate the “wins” along the way. The list will be revisited at the next meeting of the team.

Outcomes: The outcome from this meeting will include a list of people for consideration for the team. Additionally, there will be a working plan on who will reach out to the potential team members and a timeline for outreach.