

Revitalizing your Organization

A. Review the organization to see why it is not thriving.

1. What is the purpose of the organization?
2. Is the organization still needed?
3. Is the current organization meeting the needs of the members?
4. Should the purpose of the organization be revised?
5. Is the group stuck in procedure? (We've always done it this way)
6. Can a different meeting time or meeting place better suit the members?
7. Should the number of meetings be reduced?
8. Can the meetings be run better to reduce time spent repeating the same things?
9. Are there potential new members we can attract?
10. How can we bring back inactive members?

B. Survey the members to see if they have ideas for changes to revitalize the group.

1. People often take a group for granted, but will be interested if they think the group is going to terminate.
2. Some members may be frustrated because their ideas have not been heard - LISTEN!
3. Brainstorm the members for ways to change the organization to meet members' needs.
4. Use more than one form of communication.
 - a. E-mail a survey and notice of face-to-face meeting
 - b. Mail survey and notice to those who do not use e-mail.
 - c. Follow up with phone calls for those members who did not respond or attend.

C. Be flexible - consider all the ideas - too often members have the attitude, "We've always done it this way!"

1. Choose a volunteer (or group) to investigate some of the proposed ideas.
2. Do not remain bogged down in procedures. A dancer organization recently sent a letter of clarification of who was eligible to represent a club at a raid. By the time I read it 3 times, I no longer cared to follow the directive.
3. Look for new members and give them something they need. Our callers association ran caller classes and gained several new members. The new people are eager and have been trying different ideas to make the workshops interesting.
4. For a callers' association, hold an educational session before the meeting. Too often if the meeting runs long, the workshop session gets shortened or abandoned.
5. Change when the group meets.
 - a. One square dance club changed from 2nd and 4th Thursday nights to 1st and 3rd Sunday afternoons because the membership was evolving from college students to young adults with families and careers.
 - b. CCNJ changed from every month to quarterly. Meetings are Saturday morning, but callers' classes were held on Sunday afternoons to allow for religious beliefs to be honored.
6. Try a different way. Rutgers Promenaders had no resources to hold lessons on a separate night, so they tried 1 hour before the dance with alternating tips for the students during the dance.

D. Be prepared to close the group if it is no longer needed. That is a very tough decision, but necessary.

Betsy Gotta

