

Tip Sheet

MOTIVATING PEOPLE

What often differentiates an effective and responsive neighborhood group from less effective ones, are the ways that the organization communicates. Here are some ideas for tools you can use. Choose the ones that will work best for you—and select a variety to reach more people in your neighborhood group.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- Sponsor a town meeting to create a vision and build commitment to it
- Be pro-active instead of expecting the government to do it for you
- Build leadership and empower people
- Listen, listen, listen
- Ask why, why, why
- Invite a community police officer to discuss the benefits of knowing your neighbors
- Let neighbors know you are one of them, not a professional organizer, and that you have the same concerns that they do
- Let them know your experience is that there are far more good people out there than bad
- Give neighbors ownership of the problems as well as ownership of the good things
- Build relationships among different groups in a neighborhood - churches, PTA's, etc.
- Develop questionnaires to find out what neighbors want, hold community conclaves to determine the results of the survey, then create an action plan
- Everybody brings a person to a meeting
- Fire up neighbors with free hot dogs
- Pay a small stipend for each meeting attended for gas and time. When word gets around, stand back and dig deep
- Get kids involved and the parents will come
- Use recorded telephone messages to inform members about important issues
- Make sure people in the community know about events in the community - store openings, school events, etc.
- Tap into the informal networks that exist - e.g. the guy who fixes bikes, the porch where seniors gather. Get those recognized leaders to promote their issues through the neighborhood group
- Start with the barking dog rather than the corner crack house. First things first - move up to larger tasks and goals.
- Personally invite people to committee action teams - don't wait for volunteers
- Focus on smaller sections of the neighborhood to encourage involvement
- Create a group identity within the community as an entity that is working on issues
- Call people by name and make introductions for them, to make them feel comfortable and valued
- Use media, radio, print or public access TV to report on group activities
- Get local business to contribute prizes--movie tickets, plants, certificates, and give them to the member who brings the most new members to meetings or gets new people to join

STRATEGIES FOR INITIAL INVOLVEMENT

- Use a meeting topic that attracts a crowd, even if your ultimate goal is slightly different
- Gather donations of food, clothing, etc., for a free distribution table
- Make up a flyer and get kids to help pass them out to each housing unit
- Door prizes and food
- Provide free child care with snacks and activities - pull in the teens to help



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- Provide a coordinator between the community and police department to implement anti-graffiti program
- Write a welcome letter to new residents informing them about the organization and ways they can participate
- Develop a useful resource like an information kiosk or job information board
- Offer assistance with applications for alley lights, income tax preparation, etc.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS & EVENTS

- Seasonal festivals, social gatherings, celebrations and fairs
- Giving prizes for the best holiday decorations by block. Get kids to judge and pick up trash at the same time
- Have a summer picnic that involves groups socially and increases comfort level of residents - use these opportunities to identify problems and fears
- Try a spring clean-up and beautification effort with tree or bulb planting
- Neighborhood pride fair to show non-members successes in the neighborhood
- May Day celebration with kite flying
- Establish and adopt a park project to mobilize neighbors and kids for a common goal of maintaining, beautifying or improving “common ground”
- A person who has a hobby or skill can hold a small teaching session for children and adults
- Invite a cop to your next community potluck
- National Night Out block party
- Child care co-op on your block
- Ice cream social
- Swap meet, community flea market or block yard sale: hold yard sales on the same day and then provide maps of sites at each sale
- House tours - historic or remodeling - or garden tours with vegetable swaps
- Highlight local business in the newsletter
- Have a pool party at the local pool - include a dunk tank, games, prizes and free food
- Hold block dinner parties or picnics—invite

- congressional folks, knock on doors, send out flyers and make phone calls
- Have a section in your newsletter with theoretical projects, asking if anyone is interested
- Adopt a trail or park
- Sponsor a program on caring for pets
- Sponsor field trips for inspiration - attending home and garden shows, nearby house tour, visit to another neighborhood group
- Once a year to attend a Rockies game with your neighbors—take the shuttle together
- Offer self-defense classes or a presentation at a regular meeting
- Free flu shots
- Election forums
- As a group, attend liquor license hearings
- Neighborhood patrols with time-before and -after used for bonding together
- Establish safe spots for a child who feels in trouble
- Weekly happy hours at your clubhouse
- Co-ops for child care, house-sitting, large-quantity food orders, coupons, respite care

MAINTAINING COMMITMENTS

- Maintain constant communication by telephone with members to understand their needs
- Keep calls vital and productive
- Distribute information through neighborhood school systems
- Recognize each individual’s needs during meetings
- Keep members involved in solutions
- Have fun events as well as “business only”
- Have members from one section of the neighborhood working and assisting those in other parts so that all member groups have vital purpose when there is nothing happening in their area
- You can never thank volunteers enough - get their name in the press
- Develop a neighborhood history



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