

Needs Assessment & Program Planning Using Steering Committees

R. Brent Young, Ph.D.

Cooking Up Successful Extension Programs



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Inspiration for this program!



Program Acknowledgement!



ANNIE'S PROJECT

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Program Objectives

- 1. Provide a basic “How to Kit”
 - Sorry no fancy PowerPoints
- 2. Encourage discussion around planning, conducting, & evaluating extension programs
- 3. The old adage “Too many cooks spoil the broth” doesn’t apply
 - We want your ideas, questions, comments
- 4. Concepts presented are suggestions... Take what will work for you!

Why Use Steering Committees?

- *“Assist extension professionals in determining the educational needs of the community.”*

Possible Educational Needs

- Ag Agents
 - *“Utilizing deficit irrigation in alfalfa production”*
- FCS Agents
 - *“Providing ServSafe training”*
- 4-H Youth Agents
 - *“Exploring the dangers of vaping”*
- ABM Specialist
 - *“Purchase or lease that new tractor with no seat and two steering wheels”*
 - ***Developed for farmers who are losing their ass and don't know which way to turn!***

Advisory Committees vs Steering Committees

- **Advisory Committees**
 - Members are appointed
 - Members are chosen based on some criteria
 - Members provide advice
 - **Members serve a multi-year term(s)**
- **Steering Committees**
 - Members are invited
 - Members are chosen based on the needs of the program
 - Members help plan a program
 - **Members only meet once**

Goal of the Steering Committee

- *“Build credibility and investment with stakeholders.”*
 - Credibility and investment come from stakeholders giving their input and extension professionals using it.

Objectives of the Steering Committee

- 1. Verify the need for the program
- 2. Prioritize and expand on topics
- 3. Gather names of potential speakers
- 4. Collect names of potential participants
- 5. Assist in promoting the program

Steering Committee Make-up

- No exact number of participants, but 8-10 is ideal
- Potential members:
 - Cooperating Agencies
 - Federal Government (i.e., FSA, NRCS, Forest Service)
 - Local Government (i.e., health department, county commissioner)
 - Potential speakers
 - Reserve ½ of the slots for members of the “target audience”

Contacting Potential Committee Members

- Set the date for the steering committee meeting at least 6 weeks prior to the start date of the program
 - The steering committee may change the start date
- Send invitation email 3 to 4 weeks in advance
 - Invite 10 to 14 (hopefully 8 to 10 will attend)
- Provide a date by which you will call or email for a response
- Include the meeting agenda
- See sample invitation and reminder

Before the Meeting

- Recommended handouts
 - Agenda
 - Information about community need
 - Brochure from previous program (i.e., SafeServ)
 - Statistics outlining the problem (i.e., percentage of high school students vaping)
 - Send a reminder email 2 to 3 days prior
 - Arrange for a light meal (optional)

Steering Committee Meeting

- Begin on time
- Have a sign-in sheet
- Offer optional “Meet and Greet” 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting

Agenda

- Purpose of meeting
- Introductions
- Outline community need
 - Formally determine if a program should be planned to meet the need
- Determine logistics
 - Who will speak? (speakers matrix)
 - What topics will be presented? (speakers matrix)
 - When will the program be held?
 - Where will the program be held?
 - How will we secure needed resources?
- Develop participant list
 - Ask each steering committee member to submit names on an index card
- Develop a plan to promote the program

Steering Committee Meeting Follow-up

- Send a “Thank you” email
 - Include details about the program as planned
- Send electronic copies of promotional materials as soon as they are available
 - Ask members to forward on to interested friends
- Send a final email outlining the details of the completed program
 - Final “Thank you” acknowledge their contributions to a successful program

Activity- Begin identifying your steering committee

- Who
- Why you would select her/him
- What they may bring to the table
- Balance - geographical, experience, age
- Any possible concerns?

Your Turn!!!

- Questions???
- Ideas that have worked for you!!!
- Concerns/comments...

Thank you
