



THE UNITED STATES JUNIOR CHAMBER®

THE BOOK: Project Management

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-

Make It Happen

Projects are what captures the attention of the community. If projects are good, then the chapter's image in the community will be good. Conversely, if the project suffers from poor planning and implementation, the chapter's external image will suffer as well. This means it is doubly important that projects go well.

Beyond the chapter's public image, the members benefit from successful projects with increased self-confidence and enhanced skill levels.

For a project to be successful, it must be well-planned and have the support of the members. The good news is that a simple format for running a successful project is available. **The Chairman's Planning Guide (CPG)** provides 10 questions that must be asked and answered. The CPG takes committee chairpersons through every stage of the project, from initial planning to final thank-you notes. However, project chairpersons should be trained concerning how to effectively complete the CPG. The sooner in the year this is done, the better it will be for the chapter.

Along with CPG training, chairpersons should be trained in ways to effectively work with people. Differences of opinion will always exist, and there will always be those who fail to follow through. If not properly handled, these can become major personality clashes that hinder the chapter's growth and accomplishment of goals. Training chairpersons in people skills is the best way to keep things running smoothly.

The Chairman's Planning Guide (CPG)

The Chairman's Planning Guide (CPG) is a 10-step tool used to plan and evaluate a project. Every project the chapter runs should utilize this process. In addition, officer responsibilities such as dues billings or the newsletter should have CPGs to document activity. Please see the National Awards Manual for a complete description of each step in a CPG.

Committee Chairpersons

Developing the individual is the primary goal of the Junior Chamber. Being a committee chairperson is an excellent way to reach that goal by strengthening some critical manage-

ment skills. Committee chairpersons will learn to set goals, make decisions, develop plans, run meetings, and work with others, all with the result of helping others. The practical skills gained can apply to all phases of life.

There are two basic types of projects:

- **RECURRING**
- **NEW**

The recurring project should be in the chapter's plan of action for the year and should already be in the chapter budget, while new projects may not be in the chapter's plan and may not be considered in the budget.

Whether it is a new project or a recurring one, the first task is to talk with the chapter officer assigned to that area. Establish an immediate channel of communication. The officer will always have thoughts and ideas concerning the project. This relationship should last the length of the project and be one of guidance, direction, and assistance when needed.

The Recurring Project

If the project is recurring, the assigned officer should tell the chairperson if any money has been appropriated in the year's planned budget and any other requirements predetermined by the year's plan of action.

If a Chairman's Planning Guide (CPG) was prepared for the project the previous year, get a copy and read it before talking to last year's chairperson or committee members and before meeting with your committee. Pay close attention to the section offering recommendations for subsequent years.

Note: Always view a prior year's CPG as a tool. It is a report on how a project was done in the past, not a plan for the future, so don't let it stifle creativity. Ask the following questions:

- Is there still a need for this project?
- How can the purpose of this project be fulfilled better than was done in previous years?

Even though the project is in the chapter's plan of action, it's good to take a fresh look and see if a real need exists for the project to be run again. If the chairperson honestly feels there is no need, tell the assigned chapter officer immediately, because the chairperson's opinion could be right.

After determining the project's necessity, reviewing all prior year's materials, and meeting with last year's chairperson and/or committee members, review what must be done with the

assigned officer.

A committee should then be appointed before the planning section of the CPG is completed. This enables the entire committee to be part of the detailed planning process, greatly enhancing its commitment to the project. Some tips on obtaining committee members are discussed later in the subsection titled, "The Committee."

The New Project

If this is a new project, all available data concerning the project should be gathered. Call other officers and members to determine if they wish to be involved in the project and if so, what resources they can supply. If the project is part of a program promoted by The U.S. Junior Chamber, obtain a Junior Chamber Products Catalog from an assigned chapter officer, and use it to order any needed materials. It should also be determined whether a state Junior Chamber officer is servicing the project area.

After the basic information is obtained, determine the following:

- Purpose of the project
- Specific goals to be accomplished
- Net cost to the chapter
- Estimate of income, if the project is a fundraiser
- Number of members needed for the committee
- Number of members needed to assist or participate on the project

Once this is done, there should be enough information to complete the planning questions of the CPG. If this is the chairperson's first CPG, the assigned officer should help in its preparation, and if necessary, to assist in the presentation itself.

One of the most common reasons projects are not approved is because of a lack of funds. If the project costs money and funding is unavailable, identify alternative funding sources before meeting with the Board.

Determining Committee Size

When the CPG is completed, consider the number of members needed and formulate general job descriptions for each position. Begin by making a list of major actions that must occur to make the project successful. The following sample list identifies some of the items that should be included:

- Secure facilities
- Publicize event
- Obtain funds
- Arrange for and schedule personnel
- Print necessary items
- Arrange for meals
- Take care of VIPs
- Arrange for liaison with any other group involved
- Handle money
- Register people
- Obtain special equipment

- Record committee's activities

Once the major activities have been listed, estimate the time it takes to accomplish each. Then combine actions into specific jobs so common items are handled by one person and each job requires about the same amount of time. As the job descriptions are created and the number of people needed on the committee is determined, bear in mind that the bigger the committee, the harder it is to maintain control.

Presentation to the Board

When presenting a new project for approval to the chapter's Board of Directors, be sure the presentation is clear, concise, and complete. As mentioned earlier, the Board is interested in the following:

- Purpose
- Goals
- Income and expenses
- Personnel requirements

The Board considers the whole chapter before approving new projects. For this reason, expect discussion on the following issues:

- Are the purposes and goals of the project consistent with those of the chapter?
- Is the project of true value to the members and/or community?
- If the project is not a fundraiser, where will money for expenses come from?
- Does the project's timing conflict with other projects?
- Does the chapter have enough members to support this project?
- Is there a financial risk? If so, how much?

The Committee

When the time comes to select the committee, talk to the assigned chapter officer. Discuss the best way to recruit needed people. Don't assume the committee will suddenly appear from nowhere. Determine at the outset just how the committee will be recruited. The best method may include one or more of the following:

- Have the Board of Directors appoint them
- Have the Chapter President appoint them
- The chairperson recruits them from the membership
- Ask for volunteers/review member surveys for interest

Committee members are sometimes selected because of their personal interest in the subject to be addressed. Other times, it's important to choose members with special abilities or technical knowledge.

As the committee is recruited, some members will be ready to join in immediately, while others may need a bit of persuasion. The more specific the descriptions are about the jobs that need to be filled, the easier it is for a member to decide. When selling an idea to a potential committee member,

be enthusiastic. If the chairperson doesn't appear to be "sold" on the project, don't expect anyone else to "buy" it.

Presentation to the Membership

After the Board approves the project, it needs to be presented to the membership. The presentation should help familiarize members with the project, inform them of its value, and enlist their support. Be sure to cover the following in the project presentation:

- Purpose and benefits
- General description
- Location and date
- Personnel requirements
- Costs and revenue
- Publicity and recruitment value

Be clear, concise, complete . . . and enthusiastic!

Chairing the Committee

The key to a smoothly operating committee is the chairperson's ability to lead by example. Be willing to take the initiative. The rest of the committee will follow the chairperson's cue: if he or she does nothing, they'll do nothing. Fulfill the responsibilities not only to the committee as a whole, but to each individual member. Be prepared to assist committee members at any time.

Always remember the chairperson is the coordinator and motivator, not the dictator. The committee members most likely have jobs and families that come first. A good chairperson insists on cooperation that doesn't interfere with those two primary responsibilities. Get to know the members and assign job responsibilities that coincide with personalities, being sure to delegate a certain amount of authority.

Impress upon each member that the success of the project depends on how well each responsibility is fulfilled. Put all job descriptions in writing; ask the members if they have any questions; let them know that the chairperson is there if they need help; then let them do their jobs. The most important part of effective committee management is the chairperson's ability to follow up. The only way to be sure a committee member is fulfilling responsibilities is to ask.

Following up can be difficult because many people resent being "checked on." Use as much diplomacy as possible, but never let a person's reaction to questions be a reason for not following up. Chances are, those who complain loudest about being watched over are the ones not doing what they are supposed to do when they are supposed to do it.

Motivating the Committee

The chairperson is the prime motivator of the committee. However, it is difficult to motivate others; they must motivate themselves. Still, the chairperson can create a positive environ-

ment in which self-motivation easily occurs. It starts with the following "Keys to Motivation:"

- Consider each member and his or her job important
- Praise the efforts of each member
- Ask for advice
- Listen to and respect all opinions
- Provide meaningful assignments
- Give encouragement
- Be sure each member knows what is expected

Even with a motivational environment, some problems occur. An effective chairperson can recognize and deal with these situations before they become problems. Most of the committee members will work willingly and easily with each other. One of the biggest benefits derived from being a chairperson is working with a variety of personalities to form a team.

If a committee member doesn't perform no matter what approach is tried, consult the assigned chapter officer. Don't let one individual spoil the attitude of the entire committee.

Meeting with the Committee

The success enjoyed in all committee meetings is the chairperson's responsibility. The main rule is every meeting should have a definable purpose. Meetings should have one or more of the following goals:

- Make specific committee decisions
- Solve specific problems
- Check progress of all actions to date and to discuss upcoming events

Never have a meeting just to have one. Always give the members plenty of advance warning and mail notices or call members individually.

Another rule: If a meeting is worth having, it's worth having an agenda. An agenda is not something only parliamentary procedure wizards know how to prepare, it's a list of things to happen at the meeting. If possible, prepare the agenda and mail it to the committee before the meeting. If there's no time, be sure the chairperson has one. A handwritten agenda is fine in such circumstances. Try to adhere to these basic committee meeting guidelines:

- Start on time
- Stick to the agenda
- Keep it informal
- Be sure everyone is heard
- Keep the meeting moving at all times
- Adjourn on time

Appoint someone as secretary at the first meeting. Minutes make it possible to follow up on assignments. Copies of the minutes should go to each person with an assignment. Clippings, photos, and printed matter should be placed in the committee secretary's hands to be submitted with the final report.