

Best Practice Ideas That Work

Grassroots means ‘ordinary people, society at the local level’.

The Grassroots Gator Program is getting your local Gators involved in your Club. In order to get your Club in SHAPE by grassroots methods, try applying some of these items.

Fun – People want to enjoy their free time so make activities/meetings fun.

1. Discussions are good at meetings, arguments are NOT. Think Happy!!!!
2. Be realistic on what your Club can accomplish. Set your goals but do not burnout those who are trying to help you accomplish them. That is not fun!

Friendly – Everyone wants to feel welcomed and wanted.

1. At board meetings, if there is even one new person, go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves. Mention your graduating class or office or favorite hobby. Some tidbit to learn about the people at your meeting.
2. At monthly or larger events, have an officer introduce new members/guests or have them introduce themselves. Make this a part of the program.
3. Have officers wear name tags and appoint someone each meeting to welcome new members.
4. Let people know that if they have questions, see the people with the name tags.

Appreciated – Everyone wants to feel appreciated and recognized for their hard efforts. It will keep your volunteers coming back.

1. Mention specific efforts at board or other meetings/activities. It is FREE to give recognition to members.
2. Add an MVP club award(s) to recognize outstanding members. It can be as simple as creating a certificate on your computer or using the one in the Gator Club Admin Site.
3. Offer incentives for hard to fill positions like a free hamburger for the person who coordinates the viewing party. Many times the establishment will give you one free if you ask. Offer free or reduced admission to Gator Gathering if a person volunteers the entire night at registration. Be creative!

Educate – We all feel more comfortable when we know our tasks and how to accomplish them.

1. Have old officers buddy up with new officers to ‘teach them the ropes’.
2. Have an officer or member buddy up with new volunteers on events/activities so they learn.
3. Pass down notebooks or post event reports on each event so there is documentation to assist the next person coordinating the event.
4. Introduce job descriptions to the Club so each officer/member understands the responsibilities of an office and the Club, as a whole.
5. Make sure we set volunteers up to succeed. Do not give them more than they can handle or what they do not understand. If they aren’t enjoying their time, they will not come back. Train so you can retain!

Plan – Clubs succeed when there is a plan.

1. Plan ahead. Have a yearly planning meeting at the start of each fiscal year.
2. If your Club does the same events each year, put them on a calendar at the beginning and assign the events at that time. That way, you can add new volunteers along the way.
3. Share information. A Club will not be successful if only one or two people know or control everything. Encourage participation. You are creating ebb and flow in your Club by limiting information.
4. Make a plan for your Club. We want to get two new officers and five new volunteers next year or we want to make sure we have enough officers on the board at all times so we are going to recruit heavily this year.

Ask – Most people will get involved if you ask.

1. Personally ask friends, associates, and neighbors to come to events or get involved. Give them newsletters or invitations or emails that you have received.
2. Create a volunteer form and have it at your largest event each year asking for volunteers. Be SPECIFIC in what you ask. For instance, list all of the committees/events where you might need help. Use the volunteer recruitment brochure the UFAA provides.
3. Ask your members for their opinion. Provide a survey and offer volunteer options. They may feel more enticed to get involved if they know they are being heard.

Communicate – Isn't life grand when we talk???

1. If people are interested in volunteering, contact them in a reasonable time. Two weeks is TOO long. Follow up even you have no information to share at that time.
2. If people contact your website or hotline, RESPOND. You lose people if it takes you days and weeks to respond.
3. Learn the communication tools that are available from UFAA and use them! Use the Gator Mail Now (postcards & newsletters) or Listserv (email) tools...both are free!!
4. Create a press release for your local newspaper introducing your Club and asking for volunteers. Call the media outlet, ask for the correct person and then contact them. Introduce yourself and tell them what you are trying to accomplish. It can be that easy.
5. Use your RVP to help with club issues. They have been officers of clubs so they have dealt with the very same issues. Ask for their expertise and advice.

THE GOAL IS TO RECRUIT, RETAIN AND REWARD.

Highly Recommended Book:

To Lead Is To Serve:How to Attract Volunteers & Keep Them by Shar McBee (less than \$15 new/less than \$10 used)

Other suggested Volunteer books:

- Volunteers: How to Get Them, How to Keep Them by Helen Little
- The Volunteer Recruitment (and Membership Development) Book by Susan J. Ellis
- Volunteers Wanted by Jo B. Rusin
- The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management by Katherine Noyes Campbell
- What We Learned (the Hard Way) about Supervising Volunteers : An Action Guide for Making Your Job Easier (Collective Wisdom Series) by Jarene Frances Lee with Julia M. Catagnus