Description

Moving a group to action can be challenging, but an understanding of the steps needed to complete a local project is important for leaders. Students will learn how to move an idea to action and implement a local project.

Objectives

- Recognize the steps to plan for an effective group project
- Develop goals and strategies to implement a group project in the school or community
- Complete a group project benefitting the school or community

Total time with all suggested activities: 2 hours (additional time needed to complete local project)

Supplies Needed

- Flip chart paper, sticky dots or stars, flip chart markers (the kind that don’t bleed through the paper), eight 3- by 5-inch recipe cards for each participant

Activities

- Carousel brainstorming activity
- Action Sandwich

Handouts

- Project Management Action Planning
- Action Sandwich handout

Facilitator Notes

Action planning helps get students excited and organized around a short-term project. It is different than strategic planning because developing a plan takes much less time and the implementation also takes less time.

Action planning helps get an idea from the group by setting a vision for the project up front, designating roles and responsibilities, and building trust. Group members are responsible for various segments of the plan, and usually a leader is selected to help move the group and its plan from start to finish.

Groups have multiple ways to decide on their project initially. Some suggestions include:

- Brainstorming
- Selecting previous projects that were not completed
- Interviewing school or community stakeholders about current needs
- Surveying students on local needs

A carousel brainstorming activity is one way to get the group to consider project(s) on which it may want to work. To do the carousel brainstorming activity, divide the students into four groups. Give one person in each group a marker. Post four sheets of flip chart paper around the room with a title on each to include: Projects for our school, Projects for school organizations, Projects for our community, Projects for community organizations (other headings can be used as well).

Each of the four students groups will go and stand by one of the flip chart papers in the room. Each group is given one minute to brainstorm together a list of projects that could be done in the school, for organizations, the community, etc. Each group stays by its flip chart for one minute and the student with the marker writes the ideas brainstormed on this flip chart page. Continue the process, with one to 1½ minutes spent on each page. In four to six minutes, many project ideas will be listed.

After one minute, you will ask the entire group to move clockwise to the next piece of flip chart paper, read what was written by the group before it and brainstorm on that topic. The same recorder with the marker writes the ideas brainstormed on this flip chart page. Continue the process, with one to 1½ minutes spent on each page. In four to six minutes, many project ideas will be listed.
Read aloud all of the ideas on all flip chart pages. The students will have come up with many great ideas, but they now have the opportunity to prioritize them to determine their project(s). Provide four sticky dots or stars for each student and ask them to place the dot or star next to the items that interest them. Count the votes in the end to help narrow down project priorities.

Students can validate their priorities by interviewing school or community stakeholders on current needs as well as surveying other students on current needs. These are steps to take that help get additional buy-in from stakeholders who will benefit from these projects.

Group members then can self-select the project on which they would like to work. As they move into their project groups, ask them to select a group leader who will be responsible for keeping the process moving.

**Action Sandwich activity (45 minutes)**

This is a fun activity to get the groups started thinking deeper about their project. Instructions are found on the Action Sandwich instruction handout. The final outcome should be a sandwich with a realistic goal statement (or vision) to get the group started.

Review the steps in the Action Planning handout with the students and ask each project team to complete the handout by listing action steps, who is responsible for each step, by when, estimated costs and how the committee will stay connected. Students also will determine how they will evaluate the project or know they have been successful.

Regular follow-up with each project team is important. One option is to have all project teams report back to the full group frequently. Ask groups to report in a variety of ways, including:

- Five-minute TEDx talk
- Short skit
- A group commercial
- A video of an interview with a project stakeholder
- A tweet
- A story in pictures
- Other suggestions from the group

These are all fun ways to evaluate the work and provide evidence of project management and completion of the work. They also provide students with an authentic opportunity to use their leadership skills to make a positive impact on their school, an organization and their community.

**References:**


Project Management Institute Educational Foundation https://pmief.org