

How-to Guide for Planning Venturing Events



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Welcome!

The seven-step planning process is a useful tool for Venturers to plan events. This guide uses data collected from VOAs around the country to build upon each step of the planning process with ideas, suggestions, and inspiration.

The Seven-Step Planning Process

1. Define the Specifics of the Activity
2. Define the Resources
3. Consider Alternatives
4. Commit the Plan to Writing
5. Promote the Plan
6. Implement the Plan
7. Assess the Activity



Step 1: Define the Specifics

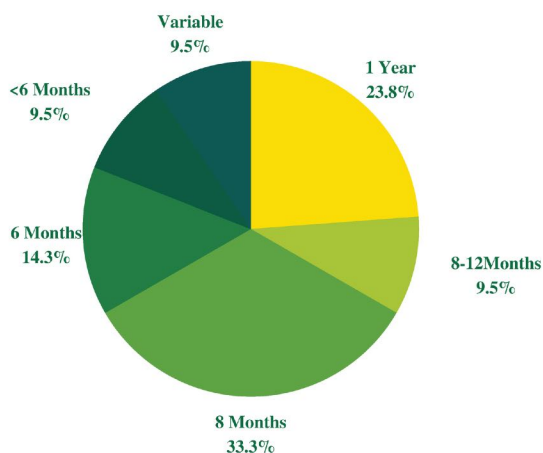
Define the Specifics of the Activity

5Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why

What will put the wow factor in your event? What does your target audience want to participate in? Is there a specific purpose for your event? Will there be specific training or program objectives? These are just some of the questions you should consider when beginning your planning process. The answers will help guide you through the next phases of planning.



When do VOAs Typically Begin Planning Their Events?



According to VOAs, some of the most popular activities at events are:

- Shooting sports
- Campfires
- Rock Climbing
- Sailing/Paddleboarding (Involve Sea Scouts?)
- COPE/Zip Lines
- Council Service Projects
- Pioneering
- Night Games
- Seasonal Sports
- Archery
- A.L.P.S. Trainings for rank
- Trainings/Activities for Specialty Awards

Having a theme for your event can help you brainstorm games, activities, and smaller parts of the program!



Step 2: Define the Resources

Define the Resources

What do you need logistically to make your program a success? Resources can be incredibly varied and include people, places, materials, money, knowledge, and more. What resources do you already have? What resources do you need to obtain? When do you need the resource by? Who is responsible for the resource? Use your team's knowledge, experience, and contacts to find everything you need. Most importantly:

Work With Your Host/Local Council

Top Things to Consider

Budget:



- What will the camp and/or activities cost?
- What will food and supplies cost? Is an extra % needed for contingency?
- How much will transportation cost?
- Are there any other expenses?
- How much money does your group already have?
- Is fundraising needed?
- What is your participant cost after considering everything, and is this price appropriate?

Human Resources:



- Who will your staff or leaders be during the event?
- What members of your team already have useful experience?
- Are there experts who are available to help you?
- Are there activities that will need trained instructors, and where will you find them?

Activity and Event Locations:



- Do you have access to free activity locations?
- Are there cheaper alternatives to your chosen location?
- Are there group or Scout discounts for your chosen location?
- Is your chosen location compatible with youth protection, the Guide to Safe Scouting, Short-Term Camping reqs, and all BSA policies?
- Does your chosen location meet all your personal, group, educational, and advancement goals?

Physical Resources:



- Does your group need camping/cooking gear?
- Do you have trainings that require additional materials?
- Do you need any specialized gear for your activity? Will the gear be provided or do you need to bring it yourself?
- Is everything you are using during the activity safe and appropriate?
- If your group needs something, is it more cost effective to rent, borrow, or buy it?



Step 3: Consider the Alternatives

Consider Alternatives

The Scout Motto is Be Prepared. How will your team be prepared to adapt your plan if any issues arise? Do you have backup plans for weather, emergency, cancellations, gear failure, etc? Considering alternatives also includes looking for different opportunities which may be cheaper, easier, less environmentally impactful, or more exciting. Having an amazing event plan is awesome, but having equally awesome alternatives will guarantee a great time for everyone even if things don't go according to plan.

What Might Affect Your Event?

- Bad/unexpected weather
- Power outage
- Scheduling; activities may take more/less time than anticipated
- Gear is forgotten or breaks
- Too much/too little food
- Unexpected crowding at location
- Medical emergency
- Wildlife impacting camping/activities
- Getting lost
- Planned activities become boring
- Anything else you can think of!

Do You Need A Short-Term Camp Administrator?

Ways to Be Prepared

- Think of everything that could possibly go wrong, and create a plan for it!
- Look at the Guide to Safe Scouting, other planning guides, and pre-made templates, and consider creating a Risk Assessment to manage potential risks.
- Bring more essential supplies than you think you'll need.
- Prepare a few alternate activity plans in case of bad weather, scheduling issues, boredom etc.
- Be familiar with the way your gear/equipment works and how to fix it.
- Consider your options if you lose access to power.
- Consider what you will do if you have to completely abandon the event. Will everyone go home? Will the group camp in someone's backyard? Movie marathon? Have an ultimate backup.
- Be familiar with Leave No Trace principles. Having to switch things up without a backup plan can lead to unforeseen environmental impact. Plan Ahead and Prepare!



Step 4: Commit the Plan to Writing

Commit the Plan to Writing

Research has shown that goals which are written down are more likely to be achieved. Committing your plan to writing can be as simple as filling out a one-page planning sheet for your upcoming unit camp or as complex as a management plan for a large event. Either way, your event is going to be more successful if you are able to organize your thoughts and ideas in writing.

Benefits of Having a Written Plan

- Event is more likely to succeed
- Easy to pass along to next leadership team if necessary
- SMART goals that are written down are easier to follow
- Nothing is forgotten
- You can easily explain your plan to other people
- Plan can be reused in the future
- You can review how well you stuck to your plan when you assess your event or activity



Management Plans:

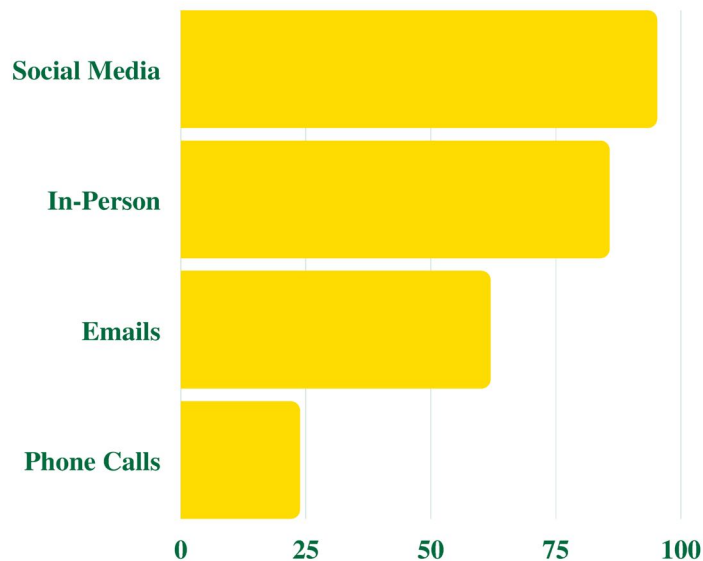
Management Plans are used in the professional event planning and recreation world. A Management Plan is an in-depth tool which takes all aspects of programming and turns them into SMART goals with assigned people, deadlines, and resources. There are several different styles of Management Plans which vary depending on the type of activity and the person or group organizing the activity. Management Plans involve many different topics including venues, contracts, inclusion plans, equipment/supplies, registration, promotion, budget, staffing, cancellation, risk management, artistic factors, environmental impact, and more. While you may not need to create such a detailed and professional plan for your event or activity, understanding what professionals use can be helpful when thinking about your own plan. Search on the web for examples of management plans as well as more in-depth guides and theories about event planning if your crew or VOA is interested in learning more.



Step 5: Promote the Plan

Promote the Plan

Best Ways to Promote Events According to VOAs



Best Ways to Keep People Interested in Events According to VOAs

- Use themes and change themes every year
- Allow down-time for unstructured fun and fellowship
- Have costume contests
- Move the event location to allow different people to participate
- Switch up the activities and games but keep the really popular ones
- Provide opportunities that aren't usually available



Creating eye-catching graphics with relevant information is key to promoting your event. Consider things like making multiple graphics, embedding registration links, including polls or reactions to engage with viewers, etc.

Be sure to follow the guidance of the BSA Brand Guidelines for all published materials and promotions

<https://scouting.webdamdb.com/>



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Step 6: Implement the Plan

Implement the Plan

Have Fun!!!

Congratulations, you did it! Your hard work and planning have resulted in your idea becoming a reality. Now you can sit back, relax, and have a great time! Well, there are still a few things to think about, but the hard work is behind you.

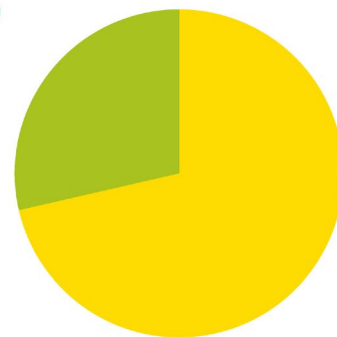
At Your Event or Activity:

- Take the time to be observant. Are people having fun? Are the activities going as planned? Is the schedule flowing well? Pause for a second and take a look around you. Is everything going as you planned it? Can you make adjustments as you go? (if not, that's fine, just take note)
- Be sure to brief staff and participants. Remember, you know your program best, and it is easy to forget that others don't have that same understanding. Don't assume people know what to do, how to do it, or when to do it. Make your goals and expectations clear so that the program can be delivered correctly.
- Accept that things are not going to go perfectly according to plan. Maybe the food which was supposed to serve 20 looks like it will only serve 5. Maybe the participants become bored of an activity quickly and a scheduling change is required. Accepting that challenges, both big and small, are inevitable will allow you to improvise and deliver your program no matter what happens.



Average Event Attendance According to VOAs

100-150
28.6%



100 Or Less
71.4%



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Step 7: Assess the Activity

Assess the Activity

Reflecting on your successes and recognizing your opportunities for improvement will help you perfect your planning skills and grow as a leader. Activities like "Start, Stop, Continue," which can be done with your leadership team and participants after the event or activity are particularly helpful. Create participant surveys, ask advisors for their thoughts, and look back at your written plan to see what became reality and what didn't. Remember, feedback is a gift!

HAVE FUN!!!

**What Can I Do
Better Next Time?**

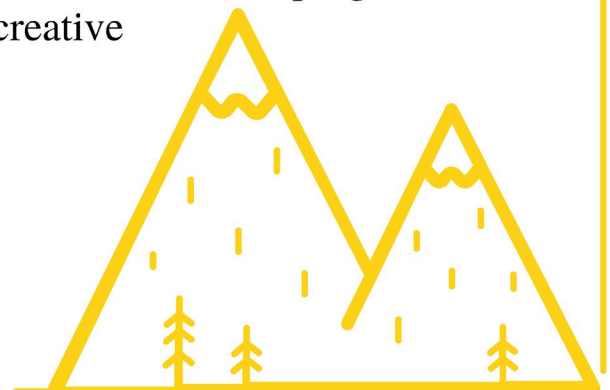
**How Can We
Improve?**

VOA Officers Suggest Considering the Following Advice:

- Start planning sooner rather than later
- Communicate well
- Promotion, Promotion, Promotion!
- Create good backup plans
- Involve other people for assistance
- Ask your advisors for help
- Appreciate feedback as a gift
- Remain flexible
- Delegate, make committees, etc.
- Make roles and responsibilities clear
- Keep your team updated
- Get things on the calendar ASAP
- Be timely
- Over-plan instead of under-planning
- Involve other B.S.A. programs
- Be creative



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We Hope That You Continue Making Unforgettable Memories in Venturing. **GOOD LUCK!**

Useful Links:

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe/

www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/training/training-toolbox/

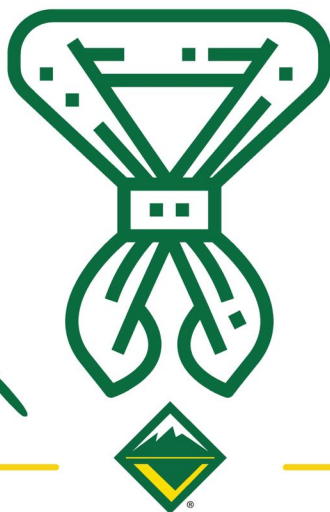
www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/voa/apply-to-be-a-voa-officer

www.scouting.org/programs/venturing

The data presented in this guide was collected during the 2020-21 VOA term from current and former Venturing leadership teams from all four of the former B.S.A. Regions.

Special thanks to all of those that contributed to make this guide possible.

Published February 2022



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