

Great Kick Off Meetings

“You never get a second chance to make a good first Impression”

In the first 30 seconds of your kickoff meeting, your people will decide what kind of a year they are going to have. Is this meeting simply a continuation of last years meetings (no change for the coming year); just another beginning to another year (same “kickoff” stuff as last year) or is this to be the beginning of the best year you have ever had? The choice is yours. The message you send is found in the details.

Here are things you and I already know (but may have been too busy to remember) about making **THIS** meeting the best it can be. Give this flyer to someone to use as a checklist or check the items off yourself to handle the details.

Making sure you have done everything you can to make this the “best” kickoff meeting possible will clearly say to your people, “This year is special and it is going to be the BEST!” “Best years” do not just happen. They are built, painstakingly, one idea at a time. Begin your year positively with an attitude that says – “We know you have a choice and we are glad you are coming to this school!”

Making Meetings Special Is Easy With This Check List

Use invitations - Yes, most of the people attending these meetings are required to be there but, like the students who will arrive shortly, they do not have to come with the right attitude. Why not recognize they have a choice of attitudes and promote the one you want? What could it hurt? The idea is to make their “have to” into a “want to.” Your mind set must be to encourage their choice of a positive attitude.

Setting - If you hold your kickoff meeting in the same place it was last year, then the “right brain message” is “Here we go again.” Changing your location demonstrates your commitment to making the experience different.

Good sound system - It is vital that each person be able to hear the presentations, to prevent side conversations and to maximize the benefits of the meeting.

Room arrangement - The food selection will influence the setup of the room. If you are providing food that requires forks or spoons, be sure you provide tables and chairs. *NOTE: Tables are good for the socializing time if you want social groups to re-form. However, if you want to mix the group better, provide only finger food and cause them to stand and socialize.* In a perfect world there would be a large empty or tabled area for mixing and socializing before the meeting begins, and a theater style arrangement of chairs with a raised platform area for the speakers for the meeting itself. *NOTE: Moving your audience to a meeting setting sets a business tone.*

Decorate - Use your marketing slogan and/or mission statement as banners. Use colorful tablecloths, plants, and centerpieces to make the room look different. There are people who love to decorate. The more people involved, the better. Decorations add that positive feeling to the gathering.

Food - In keeping with the “make it more friendly” idea, food is a must. Coffee in the morning; juices, fruit, rolls, etc. at the break, all add that special “we care” touch.

Music - Greeted by good music clearly sends a friendly and professional message. Having it play as background to the registration or arrival process says a great deal about your meeting. Not having it says a lot as well. *NOTE: As an attention-getting device to begin the meeting, turn the music up gradually for about 2 minutes, then, at the end of a selection, turn it off. The ensuing quiet often causes people to focus on those in charge.*

Nametags - Complain as they will, not everyone knows everyone else by name. The typical human response to a room full of people whose names escape them is to develop a case of “SHY.” Large easily read first name nametags will promote better interaction among your participants. By decorating the name tags with colored ribbons or other symbols of service or honors will make them even more valuable to your mission of improving attitudes. Ribbon one, for years in the profession (different colors for each 5 year increment). Ribbon two, for years of service in your present location. Ribbon three, for special commendations - taskforce service, club or class sponsorship, and other special things you want to promote.

Agenda - This is a critical piece of the puzzle. Action packed! Time lined! Information riddled! Beginning on time, and ending on time, sets the professional tone, and will help you get people to your next meeting. Nothing works better.

Entertainment -A visual and auditory tone-setter for sure. Chamber music sets a different tone than jazz. Work with the entertainer(s) to develop the right mood.

Special presentations - Honoring “one of us” is often like honoring “each of us”, so, sharing an honor of one of the attendees, provides a good feeling to everyone. From professional recognition, to successful degree attainment, family additions or just a great vacation experience, any success can be shared. If nothing else, explain the meaning of the colored ribbons on the nametags, so each member of a group can be proud and identify with others in that group.

Give-aways - Consider providing each attendee with a memento of the experience. This item could be anything that will remind them of the positive feeling they had at the meeting. If you have a theme for the year, give them something to always remind them of that theme - pencils, calendars, magnets, mugs, coasters, etc.. Anything to tie the day together as you say good bye! If you need help finding these things call us or check out differencemakers.com. teacher appreciation.

Meetings Checklist

Special invitation

Changed location

Good sound system

Room setup

Decorated

Food

Music

Nametags

Agenda

Entertainment

Special presentations

Give-aways