Planning a Workshop

In planning a Workshop, whether the Workshop is for a District, an Area, or some other group, there are several things to be considered.

First, **What is a Workshop?**
A workshop is generally an opportunity for the group to exchange information and ideas on one or more topics.

A Workshop can be a single meeting lasting an hour or longer, or it can be an event lasting one or more days and using various methods of communication.

A Workshop is not a social event, although may at times be held in conjunction with one.

Second, **How does a Workshop differ for a conference or Conventions?**
A Workshop and a Conference or Convention have different purposes.

A Convention is generally a social event held over a two or three day span, including AA meetings and frequently including social events such as a banquet or dance or a sporting event. AA sharing is usually through Speaker meetings and/or Marathon participation meetings.

A Conference is usually a Service Assembly, which may also be combined with some of the social elements of a Convention, but which has a Primary Service Purpose. The Area Assemblies at which we elect our Delegate and other Trusted Servants, or instruct our Delegate according to our Group Conscience are examples of Conferences.

A Workshop, on the other hand, is for the purpose of learning from each other and/or sharing our experience and ideas regarding the topic of the Workshop. Workshops are one good way to move toward an informed Group Conscience.

Third, **Why is the Workshop being planned?**
Workshops are sometimes held in response to a problem experience in a Group or Area, sometimes as a regularly scheduled way to informing attendees about voting issues or the General Service Conference Theme, and sometimes as a way to become more familiar with some aspect of the AA Program.

Fourth, **Who will this Workshop service?**
Workshops can be held for various groups, and each Workshop should be planned with the specific group in mind, which will be attending. For instance, the same topics may be present differently for a group, a District, or an Area Workshop. The format should be pertinent to the group receiving and sharing the information, the time allowed for the Workshop, and the facility utilized.

Fifth, **Where will the Workshop be held?**
Workshops can be held in a variety of locations. This decision will be based on available space, number of people expected to attend, format selected and convenience. Some suggested locations include hotels, public meeting rooms, such as city or county buildings, church halls, clubs, schools and assembly halls of fraternal organizations.

One comment frequently heard is that people will not attend Workshops because they are called Workshops, and that does not sound fun or interesting. A Workshop by any other name is still a Workshop. You can call it whatever you like. Some of the names used for Workshops have included: Symposium of Service, Celebration of Service, Sharing Session, Mass Meeting, or Service Seminars. Other groups have simply used a theme such as ALanguage of the Heart@ and the described the types of sharing sessions scheduled.

Tips for Planning a Successful Workshop:
1. Prior to scheduling the Workshop check with other groups in the Area to avoid conflict with other events.
2. Publicize the Workshop well in advance (flyers should be distributed at least 2 or more months ahead) so people can fit it into their schedule.
3. Visit groups in the Area and announce the function.
4. Try to involve participants from various groups in the Workshop (on the planning committee and as participants in the Workshop itself).
5. Be certain that your topic is of general interest to the attendees.
6. Provide a different format, meeting room set up, and atmosphere than customary at meetings in your Area. Make this a special event!
7. Provide appropriate refreshments, based on the length of the Workshop, number expected to attend, and available resources.
8. When publicizing event be sure your flyer contains pertinent information - remember: What, Where, When, Who and Why? Be sure you let people know how long the event will last, and if more than one session will be held provide an advance program schedule.
9. Be enthusiastic! If you are excited about this function that excitement will spread. Remember that you are limited only by your imagination. Plan an event that you would want to attend, even if you weren’t on the Committee!

Some of the types of Workshop Sessions include:

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Only your imaginations and the purpose of the Individual Workshop limit formats. Workshops, which extend over several hours or several days, may include more than one of these methods, frequently incorporating several.