

Secrets to drawing HUGE crowds to your PTA meeting

Initial planning steps toward successful meetings should include a review of past meeting schedules. Select 3 to 4 options where something fun can be incorporated into the meeting. Surveys play an important role. Collect door prizes, food and fun items **before** school starts.

- 1. Identify barriers:** Know what keeps parents away. These can include childcare, meeting notification, work/traffic issues, sports/meal time, uninteresting topics, language/cultural barriers, parents feel inadequate, parents feel unwelcome or excluded, timing of meeting.
- 2. Market:** Know what you are selling. Be attractive to parents, and sell involvement in new ways. Parents don't understand what PTA does – spell it out. What do you do for children? What do you do for parents? **How, where and when do you market?** Identify your audience – if mommies are 98% of your current audience, don't spend all your resources marketing to dads. Communicate at the sixth grade level. Use email and paper – parents do look in backpacks. Use social media. Promote where parents gather; promote consistently.
- 3. Be friendly:** Know how to get them in the door. Be welcoming to everyone. Use all methods, especially personal invitations, nametags, and introductions at every meeting.
- 4. Be fun:** Know how to keep them coming back. Tap into kids' talent, local agencies, and teachers' activities with kids. Use drawings for prizes, kids' art shows, and concerts. Keep the PTA meeting short – 15-to-30 minutes maximum. Always provide (healthy) food/drinks, door prizes.



- 5. Bring in a speaker:** Know how to *make their lives better*. Use a survey to identify topics. Questions to ask speakers include: fee, availability, equipment needs, cancellation policy, and availability of promotional posters or marketing materials.
- 6. More marketing:** Know how to keep promoting. Use another catchy name besides *PTA MEETING*. Plan out the social media, email, print, flier and electronic marquee schedule. Hang posters on school entry doors. Ask a Dad/Mom to build a PTA sandwich board to place in a visible area – before/after school pick-up line.
- 7. Engage them:** Know how to keep the momentum going. Use evaluation sheets. Ask others to become involved making jobs “small bites” which lead to larger roles.

Resources

- National Parent Education Network www.npen.org/profdef/state-networks.html
- Positive Discipline Association www.positivediscipline.org
- Parent Learning www.parentlearninglink.com
- *MamaCon Inspiration and Tools for Modern Moms* www.mamcon.net
- Summary of workshop at NPTA Convention (permission granted to print)
 - Presenters:
 - Amy Lang, Birds and Bees and Kids amy@BirdsandBeesandKids.com
 - Kim Estes, Savvy Parents Safe Kids kim@savvyparentssafekids.com