

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices #054: Program Planning Heading: Chapter Structure



Establishing and maintaining an enthusiastic and involved membership requires several things, but of utmost importance is providing a program for the membership that will maintain their interest in woodturning, will peak their interest in trying new turning ideas, and will encourage them to remain active members. Being able to inform the members about upcoming programs well in advance will ensure that they will have ample time to plan on attending the monthly meetings. Upcoming demonstrations should be planned and made known to the members at least three months in advance. Providing sufficient advanced notification to members may encourage them to research the upcoming program topics to possibly allow them an opportunity to come to the program with specific questions in mind.

To reach this end, proper prior planning by the Chapter leadership is essential. To determine if there are specific interests among the members, clubs should consider holding planning meetings, inviting the membership to attend and provide their interests to the Board. The interests of newer, younger members may differ significantly from those of the more experienced members, and this should also be taken into consideration. Soliciting ideas from the membership during a club meeting is also a beneficial method in determining current interests of the members.

During periodic Board meetings, the recent and upcoming programs should be discussed to ensure that the direction the club is heading in is healthy for the membership.

Encouraging member participation in club meetings can be enhanced by staging quarterly challenges, where members would be asked to turn, for example, an 8-inch platter and bring the finished piece to a future meeting for a show-and-tell. Members would not have to necessarily stand up in front of the membership to say anything, but they would be free to provide comments about their piece. Small awards can be considered, while keeping in mind that the work of the more accomplished turners could end up with the more novice turners losing interest if the only “winners” end up being the accomplished turners. Providing each participant with a ticket for a random drawing for a small award might prove more beneficial.

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