

PART TWO



Community
Outreach Basics

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN

As you develop a community outreach activity, there are a few basic steps you can take to increase your success. Here is a checklist to help beginners get started and to remind seasoned pros of the essentials.

DOCUMENT A PLAN

- ✓ Before beginning an outreach activity, get a couple of people in your company together to talk through the steps involved. Create a document that outlines your plan.
- ✓ Identify and prioritize your target audiences. Employees? Local students? Consider the benefits your effort will supply target audiences.
- ✓ Define goals and objectives. What are you trying to do and why are you trying to do it? Try to make objectives measurable and attainable. Be sure to include specific milestones.
- ✓ In addition to researching the project, you may want to develop materials to promote it, launch it, and evaluate it.
- ✓ Develop a realistic budget showing both financial and human resource needs. Many of the projects listed in this guide can be done inexpensively with a limited time commitment. Other projects may take a little more effort. Make an honest assessment of how much your company is willing to invest in the project.
- ✓ Find partners. Other companies or organizations in your area may be willing to help you financially and by supplying manpower resources.
- ✓ Develop several key messages or ideas that you want to communicate to your community. Look for opportunities to reinforce them through your community outreach activity, written material, and verbal communications. A strong, consistent message repeated frequently will focus audiences on your priorities. (Find out more about this in the Media Guide.)

APPROACH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- ✓ The best place to start is with existing communication channels. Take advantage of relationships that you or other company employees may already have with your target audience(s).
- ✓ Set up a meeting (by phone or in person) to discuss your outreach activity.
- ✓ Introduce your company. A fact sheet can briefly summarize your company for those who may be unfamiliar with it.
- ✓ Introduce CEF, its mission, and the program in which you would like them to get involved. Information about each program and suggested dialogue is in Part Three: CEF Program Overview and Implementation.
- ✓ Outline your goals and objectives for them. Be sure to emphasize the educational benefits that your project will bring to those who are involved.
- ✓ Show them your planning document. Explain each step.

IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Designate one or two people from your company to serve as the contact for the project. If participants are able to interact with the same staff person over a period of time, it is easier to build a relationship that may lead to future collaboration. Let other company employees know who the contact person is to ensure that questions from participants are directed to that person.
- ✓ Work with the participating school or community organization to set up a mutually agreeable date and time for your event.
- ✓ Confirm follow-up meetings (if necessary).
- ✓ Coordinate any of the necessary logistics from your documented plan (venue, refreshments, volunteers, judges, etc.).
- ✓ Use the Media Guide in Part Six to promote and publicize your activity.

SOLICIT FEEDBACK

- ✓ Solicit feedback to evaluate your efforts. Every community outreach effort should have a feedback mechanism built into it. Questionnaires, information interviews, and post-event discussions can all provide valuable information about how your program was perceived. Adjustments can be made, and programs can become even stronger.

TELL CEF ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITY!

CEF is interested in hearing from you! We'd like to know the great ways in which you have educated your community on the benefits of chemicals, chemistry, and chemical safety. Photocopy the following questionnaire, fill out the information, and send it back to the CEF offices! Feel free to use a separate sheet of paper for more space.

The Chemical Educational Foundation
1555 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22209
Fax: 703/527-7747

COMMUNITY OUTREACH QUESTIONNAIRE

Contact Name: _____

Position: _____

Company: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Activity Name: _____

Activity Description (*Briefly describe the project, including targeted audience.*): _____

Estimated Time (*How many employee hours were spent on this project?*): _____

Actions (*What actions were necessary to complete this project? What materials were needed? How did you promote the program?*): _____

Result (*Did the audience gain a greater understanding of the benefits of chemicals, chemistry, and chemical safety? How many people do you estimate attended?*): _____

Cost (*What is your total estimate of activity cost?*): _____

*Please include examples of any printed promotional items used for the activity, media clips, photos, etc.