

How To Plan For Venturing Success – Venturing's 5-Step Planning Process

This process is great for a committee retreat. The amount of time it takes depends on how much time to allot for planning sessions for each of the five steps. The minimum amount of time would probably be about 4 hours for doing a good job with a relatively small group of 4 to 8 people while it could take up to 6-8 hours with a large group and spending an ample amount of time in your planning sessions. The key for a good product is not to rush the process. It could be done in multiple sessions, but you lose energy, creativity, and the thought process between breaks. It is suggested that you devote a Saturday or even the whole weekend to this process. You won't be sorry. Doing this will give you a good start, give ownership to those involved, and give you confidence and enthusiasm.

Some committees even recruit someone outside of their group to facilitate the process. You might ask a neighboring district's chairman or chairman of another committee, or board member or even someone from your area or region to serve as your facilitator.

Ask your facilitator to remind your committee you are wiping the slate clean to build a new plan to grow and support Venturing. Explain that it is like going on a trip and that before we all go, we want to make sure why we are going, where we are going, where we are starting from, who is going with us and what they will do, and that we will need a map, check points to know our progress and will want to be able to tell when we get there. The result of what we do today (this weekend) will be a well thought out plan that will guide us over the next three years (or whatever period you choose). The will prioritize our efforts and keep us focused. We will print our plan so we can share it with others who may choose to join us on this trip. We will bring it out regularly at our monthly committee meetings to make sure we are still on track, making progress, or need to take a detour.

Get some flipchart pads so you can divide into small groups if you start with a large committee. If not a large group you can operate as one group using one flipchart pad. It works best if someone has done some research on the background needed for step four, *Analyze*.

After that, it is pretty simple. Start with step one and start asking questions like, "How do we see our district's Venturing program in three years?" If your committee is struggling getting started, share a couple of the sample vision statements found under *Step One-Vision*. Let everyone contribute while brainstorming. Remember that during brainstorming, there are no wrong ideas. Don't critique ideas at this point. That will be your next step. After everyone has contributed their ideas start working on what you can realistically do. See the section about what a vision statement should look like in *Step One-Vision*. Make sure you write down your finished vision statement so you can incorporate it into your written plan later.

Then take a short break and move on to the following steps using the same process.

The 5 Step Planning Process to Grow and Support Venturing

Step One-VISION

Have a vision of what your council or district's Venturing would look like in the future. Here are examples;

1. Our council will be seen as the premier teen development program in our area (or region).
2. In three years, I see us having one crew for every two troops.
3. I see each of our troops having a crew.
4. I see every religious organization that presently has a pack or a troop also having a crew

Note: A vision statement is like painting a picture. When you paint it, you can see it over and over and others can see it too. Some award winning athletes say one of the ways they got to where they were on the winner's podium was to first envision what it would look like being there. Same is true here. You have to envision success before you can get there. Write your vision down and share it with others. Even publish it.

Step Two-COMMITMENT

Note: Again a lesson from the athletes. We all know the stories about how committed winners have to be to accomplish their vision. If we are truly committed, that commitment guides us, helps us prioritize, and actually influences others to be committed with us. That commitment should be from the top down starting with your council key 3, the board, and the staff. Then demonstrate that commitment thru your actions like wearing the Venturing uniform, organizing crews, offering Venturing activities and Venturing Monthly Forums (Previously Roundtables), and fully including Venturing in you council and district operations. Put Venturing articles and pictures in your council newsletter and website. Have Venturers attend your board meeting and do the opening. Put pictures of Venturers in you council service center. Include Venturing at every opportunity.

Step Three-GOALS/OBJECTIVES

This is like rings on a target. It gives you something to shoot at. When you hit the ten ring you can celebrate or if you hit further out, you can adjust your actions. Goals and objectives can help you measure your progress and help keep you motivated. Keep everyone aware of your progress. Examples of goals/objectives could be having four council Venturing activities next year, or start 10 new crews, or have all crews represented at the Venturing Monthly Forum.

Step Four-ANALYZE

Note: Analyze where you are starting from to determine factors that could affect your plan which will be your road map. Your objectives/goals will be your final destination and check points along the way. However, to complete the map, we need to know where we are starting from. We also would need to know about road conditions like are bridges out, the climate, and other factors. For OUR trip, Venturing growth and support, those issues could be such as;

1. Have we started crews before, but didn't follow up?
2. Our volunteers and staff's knowledge levels of Venturing?
3. Do we have school access?
4. Council budget?
5. Previous successes or failures?
6. Our demographics?

The point here is to list factors that could affect your plan and actions.

Step Five-BUILD AND WRITE A PLAN

Your written plan is actually a group of strategies which the dictionary says is, "the art of planning." The simplest approach to building a strategy is to keep your vision and goals in mind and then ask yourself "How are we going to do that?" As an example, if your vision is to have a crew for every two troops and your goal turns out to be 100 crews, then ask, "how are we going to do that?"

Your plan could include things like recruiting needed volunteers, training, educating commissioner staffs and other committees to support Venturing, planning Venturing activities, marketing, educating troop adult leadership, council newsletter articles, and together-we-organize plans. Don't write it and then put it in a draw. Publish it, share it with others, bring it out at every meeting, use it to recruit and train, make it a dog eared, working instrument. It becomes your road map to success.