Program Ideas: HOW TO…

association for experiential education

…PLAN PROGRAMS

PROGRAM TYPES

Four types of programs are based on a primary intent to assist clients with their changes in feeling, thinking, behaving, or resisting.

PROGRAM TYPE	CHANGES client's
Recreation (R)	Feeling
Education (E)	Thinking (+ above)
Development (D)	Behaving (+ above)
Therapy (T)	Resisting (+ above)

PLANNING SEQUENCE

These programs can be planned following five steps in order, but with slight differences for each type of program (indicated by R, E, D or T).

Marketing generates sales leads that hopefully become contracts. Be very clear on the type of program (REDT) and what it purports to change.

Contracting before involves everything from a customer's initial inquiry; through negotiations on costs, content, format, or special desires; to a signed agreement with partial or full payment.

DIAGNOSING assesses clients' needs from multiple sources and through multiple methods: conversations (R), instruments (E), interviews (D), and observations (T) within the contract.

DESIGNING is based on assessed clients' needs and involves considering the criteria, program purpose, goals & objectives, and key logistics, events, timing, and staffing concerns.

DELIVERING involves presenting the program as planned by design, with introduction, body of events, and conclusion, while remaining flexible to change parts of the program as necessary. Events and activities are typically presented in an order from games to expeditions (see FAQs).

DEBRIEFING discussions (after an activity with or without non-verbal alternative methods) are where reflection, integration, and continuation take place within an experiential learning cycle. Debriefing may be skipped (R), or repeated with delivery (EDT) depending on program purpose.

Activities can be introduced by various frames (see FAQs). Facilitation techniques common to the interaction of delivery and debriefs include: fundamentals and funneling (E), freezing and frontloading (D), focusing and fortifying (T).

DEPARTING is when clients leave the program after holding a summary discussion, completing evaluations, writing personal action plans, receiving souvenirs, and scheduling a follow up. Possible follow ups include reunion (R), checkup (E), booster (D), and ongoing (T) programming.

Improving relies on receiving detailed data on the program and its quality of service from all stakeholders: clients, customer, community, contract suppliers, staff, and the profession. Repeat the **next program** with improvements.
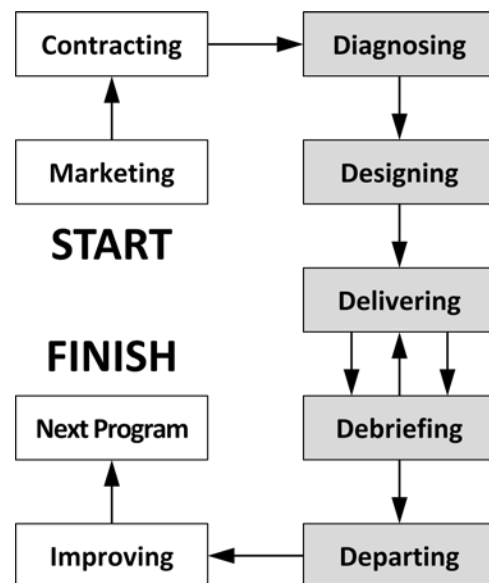
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FURTHER RESOURCES

BOOKS

Hirsch, J. & Priest, S. (2004). *Essential Elements of Experiential Programming*. Tarrak Technologies.

Priest, S. & Gass, M. (2018). *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming* (third edition). Human Kinetics.

ARTICLES

Hubball, H., & West, D. (2009). Learning-centered planning strategies in outdoor education programs: Enhancing participation and self-directed learning. *Strategies*, *23*(1), 25-27.

FURTHER RESOURCES ARE LIMITED ON THIS TOPIC. READERS MAY WISH TO CONSULT UNIVERSITY TEXTS FROM RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING AND MODIFY AS NEEDED TO SUIT THE SETTING.