

Helpful Hints

This section is dedicated to tips and advice that will help you with the details of Dance Marathon. This section does not focus on one aspect of Dance Marathon, but covers a wide array of areas. Please take thorough notes throughout the Dance Marathon year and pass them on to the next committee director.

From Brian Teclinger, Assistant Dean of Students, Iowa State University

- Send thank you letters to everyone. There is no substitute.
- Delegate and make that person responsible.
- Gifts and public recognition are good for everyone.
- Use stories of miracle children.
- Tour dancers through the hospital.
- Recognize all participants.
- Convince parents and physicians it is okay to let down their guards and participate.

From Table questionnaires at the 1999 Dance Marathon Summer Leadership Conference

These questionnaires were answered by many students at many schools. Following the questions are some of the various responses offered.

1. What motivated your committee?
 - Friendship
 - The kids!
 - Visiting another Marathon
 - Rivalries between Dance Marathon schools
 - Hospital tours
 - Retreats and bonding opportunities
 - Setting goals
 - The Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon video
2. When was your dead time (When dancers were really dragging)?
 - 3 am to 6am
 - 4 am to 6 am
 - 6 am to 10 am
 - During the bands
 - At night (before getting over the hump or halfway point of the marathon)

What do you do with extra food?

- Homeless shelter
- Save non-perishables
- Use it to add to school shelter program
- Give snacks to university program board
- Salvation Army

3. What was your biggest challenge?

- Dealing with an awful band
- Faculty and administration support
- Keeping dancers at the event
- Finding Committee members
- Competing with other Children's Miracle Network sponsors
- Getting dancers
- Student government funding
- Getting guys there
- 2 a.m. to 7 a.m.
- Catering to everyone to keep them happy
- Catering food

4. What was your biggest surprise?

- The lung transplant of a student during Dance Marathon
- How smooth everything went
- How bad the magician was
- The families staying the whole time
- Lack of dancer retention
- The grand total
- Enemies who became friends
- Lots of dancers (300)
- Getting Krispy Kreme as a sponsor!
- The lack of motivation
- The long-term commitment

5. How did you get prizes?

- By being professional
- If you don't get one thing, ask for something else

Presentation Pointers

The keys to effective presentations are organization, preparation and practice. Many people who seem to be born speakers have actually practiced many times and have given a lot of presentations. This section will give you ideas that will make your presentations and presentation styles shine.

Anxiety

If you find yourself becoming nervous, you are not alone. A recent poll revealed the top fear of American adults is speaking before a group. Here are some ideas on how to handle anxiety-

1. The audience is your best ally-- Pick out several people in different sections of the audience and speak, or appear to speak directly to them.
2. Practice positive self-talk:

Bad Example, "I'm not going to blow this; I'm not going to flounder."

Good Example: "I'm going to give these people the best I have. I am prepared and when I am finished they will be climbing over each other to get in line to support Dance Marathon."

3. Visualize success in advance-- Take 15 minutes before going to bed the night before your presentation and visualize giving a calm, powerful presentation.
4. Arrive as early as possible-- This will help you get accustomed to the space between you and your audience and will help you prepare the volume for any audio-visual equipment and even the projection of your voice.
5. Rehearse-- The audience can tell when you aren't prepared. Rehearse your presentation before a mirror or to friends who will give you an honest critique. This will minimize 75% of anxiety. Experts also claim that 95% of success is directly based on preparation.
6. Relax-- Get up a bit early the day of your presentation. This will give you time to eat breakfast (very important), do a once over of your presentation and maybe get in a little exercise. Prepare and lay out your wardrobe the night before.
7. Refresh-- Go to bed at a reasonable hour. You will be more prepared the next day with a full night of sleep.

During the presentation

1. Explain the purpose of your presentation to yourself-- I am here to motivate my audience to participate in Dance Marathon. They are here to find out how to improve their image and/or product sales

2. Add spice to create excitement and keep the audience engaged-- Videos and an interactive presentation help to accomplish this. Relate becoming with Dance Marathon to other community service or philanthropy they have undertaken personally or with their business. There often exists a fine line with this tactic. Too much enthusiasm can appear artificial and turn the audience off. Most importantly, be yourself and have fun.
3. Prepare notes-- Notes on a 3x5 card are common and often act as a great security blanket to combat nervousness as long as they are not read verbatim. Do not type your presentation out and read it. It creates the image that you aren't really sure you know what you are talking about.
4. Speaking habits to avoid-- When you are listening to a speaker, what do you want to hear? Avoid habits like vocal interference (“Uh,” “You know,” “Um”), grammatical errors (bad grammar crushes your credibility), structural breaks (bad transitions from one subject to another) and emotional noise (leave emotional baggage at the door).
5. Successful speakers are NICE
 - Natural
 - Interesting
 - Confident/credible
 - Enthusiastic

Work Ethics

- ✓ Be committed to the mission, to Riley Hospital for Children and to put both above all other organizations.
- ✓ Be a team player.
- ✓ Understand your role within the organization.
- ✓ Be in sync with the person to whom you report.
- ✓ Take ownership and responsibility of your area. When I have an idea that I think will help, or perceive a problem that needs to be addressed, I will suggest solutions.
- ✓ Be respectful of each other's time. Schedule time to meet, be organized and do not be late.
- ✓ Be a positive influence on others. Set an example. Don't be a complainer, it erodes morale. Don't build obstacles, deliver solutions.
- ✓ Don't down talk the organization to anyone. This is a serious breach of commitment to the mission and the organization.
- ✓ Think about the big picture when planning new ideas and identifying new opportunities in your respective areas. How does the idea apply to the mission?
- ✓ Each member should plan and then execute- but please execute. Don't become bogged down in the process- action leads to results.