Today’s Learning Objectives

• You will learn how the information gathered at a facilitated visioning session can be used to develop a successful, focused Master Gardener program
• You will participate in a hands-on facilitation activity
• You will learn how the organizational tools created as a result of facilitated sessions can assist with program goal setting, long-term planning and creating achievable outcomes
• You will learn what a SWOT analysis is and how to apply it to a strategic plan
• You will learn how to identify early adopters to promote organizational changes
What does the future of your Master Gardener Program look like?

- Strategic Plan (SWOT Analysis and possible solutions)
- Program Vision

- Volunteer engagement
- Volunteer empowerment

Why?

- A new Master Gardener Coordinator
- Fluctuating volunteer base
- “Been doing it this way for X years”

Other states/counties
- Polk County Master Gardener Program Visioning Report
- Marion County Master Gardener Program Strategic Plan
- Georgia Master Gardener Association Strategic Plan for Growth 2013-2017
- WVU Master Gardeners Five Year Plan
- Hennepin County, MN Master Gardener Program Strategic Plan 2011-2013

Revisit your plans every 3-5 years
## Marion County Strategic Planning Session

**Purpose:**
- To set short and long term goals
- To maintain focus and reevaluate program objectives at least every 3 years
- To ensure our program goals and objectives align with UF/IFAS Extension
- To ensure our program aligns with the FL Master Gardener Vision and Mission

## Marion County Master Gardener GOALS

1. To ensure a strong future for Marion County Master Gardeners by stabilizing membership and leadership.
2. To provide appropriate, high quality programs, events, and educational opportunities for Marion County residents, including activities for youth of all ages.
3. To continuously expand Master Gardeners’ skills by providing appropriate, high quality programs and educational opportunities.
4. To increase visibility and relevance of the Master Gardener Program through appropriate branding and marketing.
5. To maintain fiscal responsibility.
6. To still have fun while meeting these goals!
Marion County Strategic Planning Session

Examples of Strengths:
- Hard-working and committed members
- New class every year
- Good facilities
- Proximity to UF
- Positive relationships
- Continuing education programs & field trips
- Award-winning Facebook page
- Fundraising
- Financial stability

Examples of Weaknesses:
- Rapid growth in programs - Sometimes overextended
- Not enough visibility
- Resistance to change
- Not enough public education – need to offer new things
- Lack of coordination with other Extension services
- Internal communications are inconsistent
- Lack of leadership succession planning
- Inconsistent effectiveness of Mentor Program
- Membership needs to be more involved in planning & problem-solving
- Signage
Marion County Strategic Planning Session

**Examples of Opportunities:**
- Expand visibility/Explore new marketing venues
- Continue partnering with other Extension Departments – FFL & 4-H
- Improve/expand Mentor Program
- Fill existing Board/leadership vacancies
- Improve communication at all levels
- Keep up with technology
- Strengthen educational opportunities for members/expand knowledge base
- Expand educational programs for public
- Continually update Educational and Spring Festival activities to remain relevant to the community
- Increase interactions with public school system
- Expand recognition of MG accomplishments

Marion County Strategic Planning Session

**Examples of Threats:**
- County is experiencing significant population growth and clientele is uneducated in horticulture, water quality and conservation
- Plant Clinic traffic is declining, many people using the internet to research their own issues
- Lack of ability to attract younger people to Master Gardener Program
- Impact of technology – Facebook may not last forever, new programs are difficult to keep up with
- UF / County impact on financial situation
- Effectiveness of traditional marketing venues
Polk County Visioning Session

What we did
- Facilitation group met with Master Gardener Coordinator
- Developed survey
- Analyzed results to develop visioning session agenda
- Created agenda using facilitation techniques
- Conducted visioning session
- Compiled results into a report
- Shared results with Master Gardeners
- Developed ways to address results of visioning session

Plan for facilitators to conduct your session

- DYK that there are UF/IFAS Extension agents that had been through facilitation and leadership training (Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute—NRLI)?
Polk County Visioning Session

- Outreach issues
- Expectation issues
- Leadership issues

Session focused on three main categories
1. Identify barriers in each category
2. Provide solutions to barriers

Tips for smooth sessions

- Met during a scheduled meeting time
- Allow 2-3 hours
- Familiar surroundings
- Food!
- An icebreaker is a good way to set the tone for the session
Let’s try it!

Facilitation Activity: Roaming Tradeshow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round one:</th>
<th>Round two:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Å Assigned groups for first round</td>
<td>Å Self-select either group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Å 2 groups (count off: 1, 2, 1, 2)</td>
<td>(2 groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Å Provide barriers</td>
<td>Å Provide solutions to the barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Round 1

**Group 1:**
What are the barriers to volunteer engagement in the Florida Master Gardener Program?

**Group 2:**
What are the barriers to community engagement in the Florida Master Gardener Program?

*Jot these down on your flipchart in your groups!*
Round 2

**Group 1:**
What are some possible *solutions* to the barriers to volunteer engagement in the Florida Master Gardener Program?

**Group 2:**
What are some possible *solutions* to the barriers to community engagement in the Florida Master Gardener Program?

*Jot these down on your flipchart in your groups!*

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**Addressing the results of your session**

**Marion County**
- Strategic Plan
  - Review/ update organizational chart
  - Fill leadership positions and assign tasks

**Polk County**
- Visioning Task Force
  - Annual job fair
  - Handbook & organizational chart
  - Annual MG survey
  - SWOT analysis to continue to work on program barriers moving forward
Quotes from Master Gardeners

“I think we are changing and going in a more focused method.”

“(I want to see our Master Gardener program) as a strong and cohesive group— one with identified projects strongly supported by adequate volunteer participation.”

“I think that it's important for the success of the group to have a clear mission, and to have clear info from the leader about what he/she wants from the volunteers.”

How can YOU take this information and apply it to your programs?

â• If you are looking for direction within your county program and want the feedback of the members
â• If you have friction within your county Master Gardener program, a safe place for them to share their feelings and thoughts is often enough to create positive change in the organization
â• Remind Master Gardeners of the program’s goals
â• Address leadership issues and develop your county’s plan to retain active volunteers
How can YOU take this information and apply it to your programs?

A Potential addition

- Personality tests for your chairs or board members
  - The Four Tendencies: https://gretchenrubin.com/books/the-four-tendencies/intro/
  - The Big Five: http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/
  - VIA Institute on Character: https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/Account/Register
  - McClelland’s Social Motivators Quiz

References

- Flipchart graphic: https://openclipart.org/detail/242865/flipchart-with-content
- Bucket list graphic: https://openclipart.org/detail/285987/bucket-list
- Emojis:
  - https://openclipart.org/detail/279690/sad-face-emoji-yellow
  - https://openclipart.org/detail/258248/neutral-smiley-face
  - https://openclipart.org/detail/183957/happy-day
- WVU Master Gardeners Five Year Plan: https://extension.wvu.edu/lawn-gardening-pests/master-gardener-program/master-gardener-association/vision-statement
- Likert-Type Scale Response Anchors: https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/sas/docs/Assessment/likert-type%20response%20anchors.pdf
- Qualtrics: https://www.qualtrics.com/
- UF/IFAS EDIS Fact Sheet “Working with Nonprofit Organizations in Community Settings: The Strategic Plan”: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/gy837
Questions

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