




How to

ORGANIZE A WWF CLUB

Panda Ambassadors

A large-eyed gecko with prominent, bulging eyes and a patterned body of brown, tan, and yellow is shown in profile, walking across a sand dune. The background features a dramatic sunset sky with soft, wispy clouds in shades of blue, purple, and orange. The gecko's shadow is cast on the sand to its right.

Organize a WWF club at your school or in your community to bring like-minded people together. You can get a lot more accomplished, and have a lot more fun, when you're working as a team.

Step 1. Envision your club

What do you want your WWF club to be? You have a lot of options. It could be a club that works on community environmental projects. It could be your Panda Ambassador task force. You could focus on outreach and public awareness. It could be a fundraising group. It could be a nature-exploring or educational club. Or maybe you want to create a social club for people who want to discuss environmental issues. It could be a combination of all the above.

If you're in school, do you want to start a club for students only, or will it be for the general public? You could target your membership to a specific demographic that you feel is neglected by existing local environmental groups. Do you want your club to be a place for environmentalists who are also people of color, LGBTQ, women, or within a certain age range?

Picture an ideal outing for your club: What are you doing? Who is there? Are you working hard, learning, partying? At the end of a year, what do you want to have accomplished? New friends? A cleaner, greener community? Funds raised for conservation?

Come up with some ideas for what you want your club to look like, and then be willing to be flexible to meet the needs of the community.

Step 2. See what's out there

Before you start to publicly market your club or recruit members, do a little research to see what else is out there. If there are other environmentally themed groups in your area, decide whether your concept for a WWF club offers members something truly different, or whether you're better off joining an existing club and influencing them to work on some WWF-focused projects. In a school with a limited population to draw from, this is especially important. You don't want to compete with other clubs that have similar missions.

Step 3. Work out the logistics

If you're starting a club at a high school, you probably need a teacher sponsor. If your school is fortunate enough to offer environmental science classes, start with that teacher. Otherwise, anyone who seems passionate about nature and the environment could be a good fit.

College and high school clubs also may need formal permission from the administration before they can start publicizing and recruiting in earnest. Check with your school to see what the guidelines are. It may be a simple registration of the club name, or you may need to wait until the organization is established and you can demonstrate that people are interested.

You'll also need a time and place to meet—or maybe you want the club to be entirely online. Either way, you'll need to set up a way to communicate with club members. Think of the best platform on which to host club members, especially if this is a community or general public organization. You might use Facebook, Google Groups, Meetup.com, or any number of other sites that best suit your needs.

Step 4. Draft a mission statement

Now that you've done your research and worked out some logistics you should have an even better idea of the specific need your club will be filling. Draft a mission statement that briefly outlines what you want the club to accomplish and who it is for. This can be informal and rough, to be finalized later once your club has a membership that can help. But for now, you just need to get some words on paper to describe to others what they will be doing if they join your club.

Step 5. Start recruiting

In a school setting, recruiting means posting fliers, talking to friends, and getting your club mentioned in announcements and newsletters. You may want to kick things off with an open invitation to an initial-interest meeting.

In a community or general public setting, recruiting will most likely begin online. Set up your page on whatever platform you decided would work best. Then post about the new group in neighborhood forums and on pages for people with similar interests. If you have a list of contact information collected from previous events or presentations, ask these people to join. You may have trouble getting your community interested right away—just be patient and keep promoting your club. Your membership may be small at first, but once you start doing cool stuff (and telling the world about all that cool stuff) people will start joining.

Step 6. Meet up!

Even if your club will conduct business primarily online, meeting up face-to-face is crucial for building relationships. It's also helpful for getting work done.

For a formal club, your first meeting might be organizational—working on the mission statement, electing leadership, setting ground rules, and establishing goals and objectives. For a less formal club, you might just want to grab coffee and get to know each other. Or maybe you want to get straight to work with a neighborhood cleanup.

And, of course, be safe about planning meetings if you've never met most or any of your members. Schedule meetings in the daytime in a public place and bring a friend or two.

Step 7. Keep your members engaged

Once you have a core membership for your club, keep people engaged by planning regular meetings, outings, activities, and projects. If possible, establish a set schedule—and stick to it—to help people get in the habit of attending club meetings and events.

Make sure you're fulfilling the club's mission. Set goals for your club, even if it's more informal or social, and check in regularly on your progress towards those goals. Goals could include hosting a nature walk once a month, raising a certain amount of money, or hosting a few community education and outreach events.

Most of all, keep your members engaged by having fun! Even if your club is based on hard work like cleaning up the community, there's no reason you can't have a good time while you're at it. Take and share lots of photos. Get to know the people in your club and make friends. And remember to take time to celebrate your successes and achievements.

Step 8. Share your experience

Log on to the Panda Ambassador Facebook group and let us know if you're thinking about starting a club, or if you've successfully started one already. Give other Ambassadors your tips for keeping people engaged, share your recruitment fliers, or ask for feedback on your ideas.