

# Envision Enable Energize

For chapter leadership, take the Triple-E approach, then Enroll members

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Leadership in woodturning organizations, most would agree, is both vital and critical to the success of a chapter. Just as a great woodturner is not necessarily the best teacher, your chapter's best woodturner does not necessarily possess the skills to successfully lead an organization of volunteers.

If you're chosen for a leadership role, you may take comfort in knowing that leadership skills can be acquired—just as you've learned the technical skills of woodturning.

## Common sense

Leadership is about having a lot of common sense. As woodturning organizations consider the selection of new officers and leaders (through whatever means the chapter bylaws have designated), having a perspective on the topic of leadership will

most certainly improve the selection process. A good starting point for understanding leadership is what we call the Triple-E model: Envision, Enable, and Energize. This is a model developed from implementing corporate training and observing chapters and other non-profit organizations. Briefly:

- **Envision** means that the leadership sets organization direction, which can range from something as simple as an informative monthly meeting to as complex as a regional woodturning symposium.
- **Enable** means to develop the skills of the chapter volunteers (elected and appointed) who will carry out their tasks.
- **Energize** means a lot of leading by example. Chapter leaders need to behave in ways that promote the vision of the organization.

## Find a direction

In a volunteer organization, **envisioning** is most important, and visionary leadership is where it all begins. The chapter leaders need to become skilled in providing a focus and direction (vision) to others. Envisioning includes the development of a direction—both short term and long term—for the organization, and then articulating that direction to the organization.

Envisioning has to be developed in ways that meet the established protocols of the organization and also lead to a definable goal. If the vision is too general, it will not excite the volunteers. When executed properly, members will be onboard to help deliver the vision.

## Develop a plan

To **enable** the organization to progress, there must be a plan. The ability to develop a plan against any defined objective is the second critical factor for leaders. This is where, we believe, most volunteer organizations succeed or fail. Planning is critical because it connects the individual volunteer to delivering the chapter goals, and therefore, energizes the organization to do even more. It's up to the leaders to plan for success—"winging it" won't work.

As soon as possible after new officers are elected, the entire board of directors/executive committee should meet to

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establish a plan for the next 12 to 18 months. The plan might include areas such as recruitment, budget, fundraising, shows, demonstrators, or seasonal events (demonstrate and display tree ornaments in November). Chapter leadership will drive the organization forward.

The plan should include delegation of responsibilities to other members, and the followup to hold them accountable for what they commit to do. An ongoing review (monthly or at least quarterly) of the chapter's status vs. the plan is an important element for success.

### **Be a cheerleader**

To further **energize** the chapter toward execution of the plan, the leadership must take the initiative and followup with the membership on its role. Since members are volunteers, many of them also have jobs and other priorities (woodturning may not be at the top of list). Followup by the leadership becomes important, since there is no other system of reward or motivation among chapter volunteers.

Leading by example will again energize the chapter as others, by nature, seek to follow the norms established by leadership. If the leader is a good role model, he or she will set the tone to accomplish all of the right things. The right things include integrity and all the little details such as showing up for all of the meetings, meeting

your own commitments, being on time, paying your dues on time, sharing the workload, applauding good effort, and providing positive feedback.

### **Woodturner's bonus E: Enroll new members**

All of which brings us to a bonus fourth E in our EEE model (now the EEE+E model): **Enroll** new volunteers in the organization. Membership recruitment is vital to the survival of any volunteer organization.

To really highlight the importance of recruiting new members, consider the chapter where the average membership age was 70. For a number of years, the chapter staged a big art show as its major fundraiser. In the intervening years, membership recruitment was basically nonexistent, and the organization ceased staging the art show as the number of able-bodied volunteers diminished.

Younger people are now hesitant to join because they do not want to get stuck doing all of the work. Obviously, this is a chapter in trouble.

### **Summary**

As chapter leaders develop the vision, create the plan, engage the members in the plan, and enroll new talent and resources, the members becomes energized to take on jobs they know they can accomplish. As more members are involved, each will gain a sense of

accomplishment and a feeling of being an integral part of the woodturning chapter.

Chapters that have followed this model realize that leaders will create greater overall satisfaction and enjoy their roles more as members become more active.

### **Other resources**

Under Chapter Best Practices link on the AAW website ([woodturner.org](http://woodturner.org)), there are more than 20 documents to assist AAW chapters. To contribute an article, contact Bill Small ([williamsmall@comcast.net](mailto:williamsmall@comcast.net)).

Here are a few more leadership resources to check out:

- BoardSource.org includes a great search button to find specific information. Booklets (\$15 to \$20 each) are available on many subjects.
- *Managing the Non-Profit Organization* by Peter Drucker (about \$15).

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