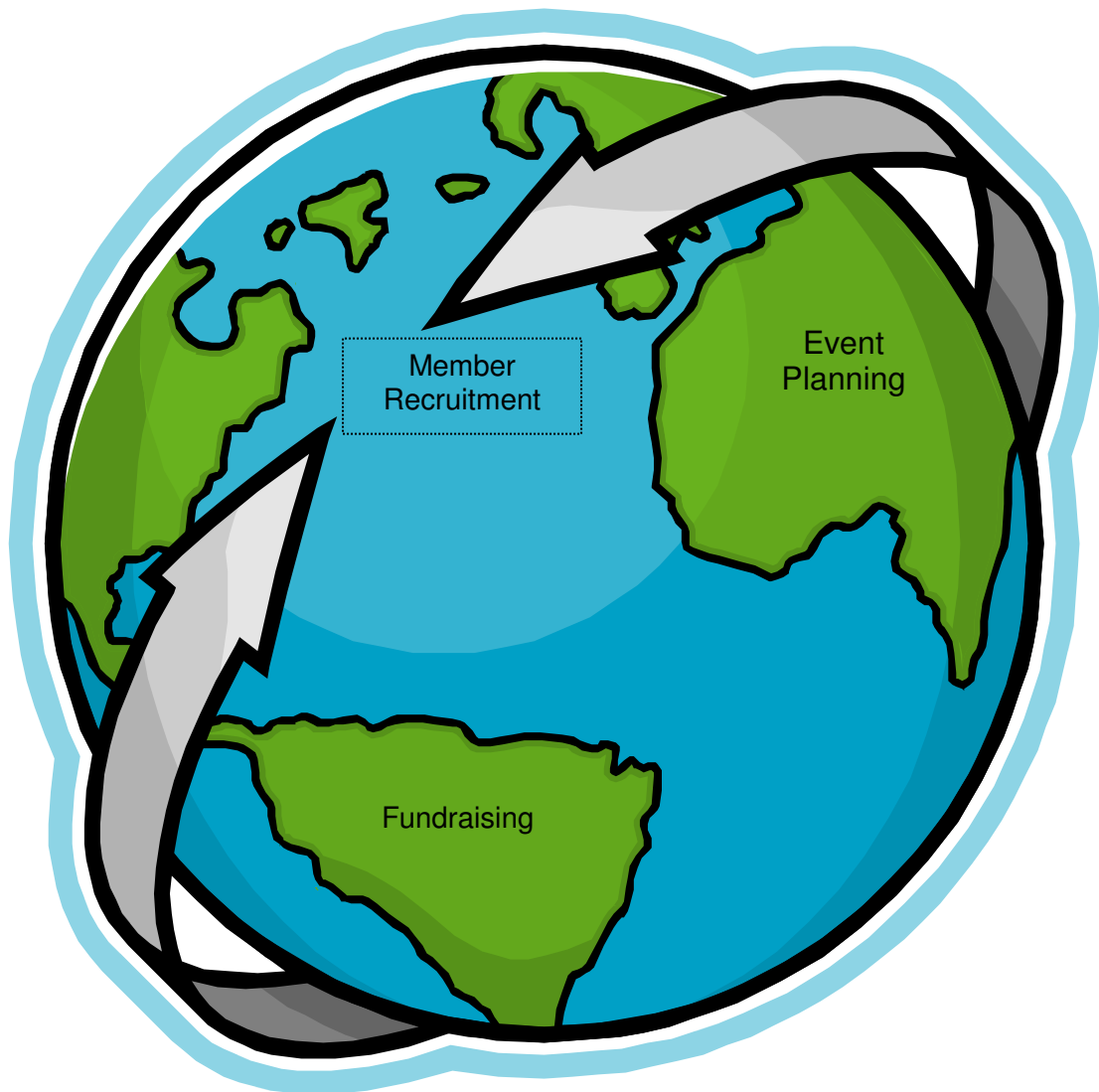


The World of an Alumni Chapter



Chocolate Chip Cookies:

How to build alumni involvement



Everybody likes cookies...cookies draw people! The key to a great alumni chapter is to think of the chapter as a chocolate chip cookie. Cookies are made of flour, baking soda, salt, sugar, eggs, vanilla, butter, and chocolate chips. As described below, the ingredients of the cookie, like the organization and operations of an alumni chapter, are what make cookies so good.

Flour: Resiliency

Chapters have to withstand all types of circumstances and show members their staying power. A flourless cookie just breaks into little crumbs the moment you bite into it.

Baking Soda: Elevates

Chapters have to have cheerleaders in their organization and must "lift" its members to new heights. A flat (unleavened) cookie is not a cookie -- it's a wafer or a biscuit.

Salt: Steadies

Chapters have to build gradually and balance its "tomorrow" goals with "today's" resources to sustain member interest. A cookie without salt means one of the other ingredients dominates and there's not balance of flavor.

Sugar: Sweetens

Chapters should be gracious to their members; cookies without "sweet" are nasty.

Eggs: Binds

Chapters should be the "thing" that brings GMU and its alumni together. Chapters should be structurally bound by operating guidelines. Similarly, cookies without eggs tend to be dry and crumble easily.

Vanilla: Aromatic

Chapters should build expectations (smell) long before a member gets involved with (tastes) the chapter. The smell of the cookie baking makes your mouth water.

Butter: Flavor

Chapters must give members memorable experiences in all of the chapter's efforts. Using the analogy, butter carries the flavors throughout the cookie.

Chocolate Chips: Distinction

Chapters should bring members a unique experience. Chocolate chip cookies without chocolate chips are just cookies.

Cornstarch (the secret ingredient): Surprise

Chapters should try to give members a bit of the unexpected/non-scripted every now and then. For cookies, the cornstarch makes the cookies soft and gooey. The cookie would be good without it, but it's so much better with cornstarch

Of course, merely combining all of these ingredients won't give you a cookie. Chapters have to blend all the ingredients (coordinate) in specific amounts (delegation); bake at the right temperature for a few minutes (work), and cool (relax).

Oh, and bring the cookies to the next alumni chapter event. Everybody likes cookies!



Chocolate Chips for Chapters

featuring ideas for

PUBLICITY TIPS

Top 10 Things Alumni Chapters can do for great PUBLICITY

10. Don't go broke!

Utilize all free advertising: press releases, articles in your newsletter, listervs.

9. Pitch to future members

Ask professors in your field to announce the event in class (and offer credit for participation).

8. Tell the World (Wide Web)

Post the event on your website/blog, Alumni Association website, your school's website, etc.

7. Serve the Public

Release a public service announcement (PSA) on local favorite radio stations and cable TV

6. Invite with E-vite

Send a special invitation to your networks using this [free] on-line service.

5. Come to the table

Advertise your event at another big event (i.e., a local fair) with a table or booth.

4. Save the date

Mail/e-mail "save the date" postcards with your event date and contact info

3. Sign off

Include details about the event in your e-mail signature

2. Invite your alumni friends

If the event is so great, wouldn't you want to invite your friends?

1. Walk down memory lane

After the event, post photos on your website/brochures and include a brief description

