

Tips and Tricks from the Trenches



**An Adobe Managers
(and Co-Managers) Guide**

Welcome to the Adobe User Group Managers Guide!

This guide is a supplement for the materials given to you from the Program manager.

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You signed up to create a new User Group. What now?

What is an Adobe User Group?

An Adobe User Group is a gathering of like-minded individuals that come together on a regular basis to share their knowledge, information and expertise with each other about Adobe products and technology in general.

The goal of an Adobe User Group is to build community, allow members the opportunity to network, collaborate, master new skills, and learn from peers in a stimulating and fun environment.

Adobe User Group Requirements

- All groups must align to Adobe's mission of changing the world through digital experiences
- Hold regular meetings, physical or virtual, with a guideline of **8** times per year
- Maintain a public current calendar of the User Group's activities
- Display the official Adobe User Group badge on their online destination
- Foster community amongst the members
- Have an official User Group Manager recognized by Adobe User Group Support
- Register and keep all information about the User Group current via the Adobe Self- Reporting Tool. (Note: this tool is currently in beta testing, and won't be a requirement for all UGMs until public launch [May 2013])
- Post meetings and minutes/notes/content online, either on an external site or an Adobe-provided destination
- Sign an Adobe non-disclosure agreement (NDA) and abide by its terms and conditions
- Read and receive information shared via the Pre-release and announcements on the private Community Leader Forum
- Engage with Adobe Community Managers, other UGMs, Adobe Community Professionals, and Adobe Evangelists on Adobe's community platform(s)
- The manager may choose a Co-Manager to help organize and support the group (suggested but not required)

Adobe will support the User Group in several ways.

- Promote the Adobe User Group on Adobe's Community Hub destination
- Provide one 12-month Creative Cloud membership every 6 months away as a raffle item (Raffle prizes may be redeemed from January to June and July to December. In countries where CCM is not available, an alternate product can be substituted.)
- Provide a Community Adobe MAX discount
- Provide Adobe product discounts to members
- Provide access to NDA information
- Provide a 12-month Creative Cloud membership for his/her own personal use (requests are limited to one every 12 months)
- Provide access to TechWednesday weekly eSeminars
- Provide access to the latest demo assets, product info, and presentation examples, when possible
- Provide an Connect account to facilitate delivering eSeminars for virtual meetings of the group
- Provide a discount to register for the Adobe MAX annual conference
- Provide access to the private Community Leader forum and Community Hub destination
- Enable use of the Adobe User Group Manager badge to promote a group
- Provide a discount to Lynda.com, and other sponsors discounts like Peachpit, O'Reilly and more

Funding or promotional items (known as swag) from Adobe is not guaranteed and will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. User Groups are encouraged to be self-sufficient due to the high volume of User Groups worldwide

** Adobe makes a great effort to support all our User Groups, no matter their location. However, due to world politics or circumstances beyond our control, supporting groups in some nations may not be possible.*

The general email for the Community Program Managers is CommunityManagers@adobe.com

User Group Co-Manager

A Co-Manager is selected by the UGM to help organize and lead the User Group. It is the UGM's responsibility to inform Adobe of the Co-Manager selection as well as any changes to the Co-Manager's status.

At the UGM's request, a Co-Manager may receive the following benefits:

- ✿ 12-month Creative Cloud membership (requests are limited to one every 12 months)
- ✿ Connect account
- ✿ Moderator/Editorial access to Adobe User Group platform (groups.adobe.com and Community Hub)

What does being an Adobe User Group Manager mean to me?

User group managers are a special breed of people. It typically means they are the over-achievers, the people others look to for knowledge on the latest software or gadget. They don't settle for mediocrity, and that shows in pretty much all they do. Managers love to see their group get excited about a topic or speaker and strive to make it worthwhile for all the members. They are always figuring out ways to make meetings bigger and better. If that just described you, welcome to the club.

Between the Community Program Managers and your fellow user group managers, there is a wealth of information if you just take some time to go through it. Your fellow managers are here for you. We have been there, and know what's it is like to be a new manager. Take advantage of us. Ping us on the list. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask a question. There are groups of all sizes, from general groups, to UX and every type of product. Groups can cater to professionals, beginners, educational, corporate groups and more. So whatever kind of group you have, there is someone else out there who knows what it's like and can give advice.

There are just a few simple rules to follow, and between the Program manager, this guide and the new Community Hub, and attending a M2M (Manager 2 Manager) meeting hopefully you will get the majority of your questions answered.

The purpose and objective of your group

Member perspective

The members will look to you for guidance and you may have to nudge them to action every now and then. Keeping members involved in the group will always be a challenge as they will gladly let you take charge. Right from the beginning have them involved with their group, have them help choose topics, speakers and anything else you can think of. Remind them on a regular basis that it's their group, not yours.

They will expect at least some of the following:

- ✿ Speakers talking on relevant up-to-date topics they help choose and is relevant to the group's charter
- ✿ A consistent meeting place at the same time each month
- ✿ Refreshments depending on the meeting time and location
- ✿ Social interaction and networking opportunities with their peers. Give them some time each meeting to socialize and network. Anything to promote interaction
- ✿ If there are other user groups in the area, promote them to your members

Besides the information they get at meetings, they will also get some great perks from sponsors and Adobe. Remember that content is king. Utilize Adobe Connect and other UGM's and ACP's as speakers.

Adobe's perspective

Groups must have a minimum of 8 meetings a year. If groups aren't meeting on a regular basis, you lose members, and if you don't have time to take care of the group, don't be ashamed to ask for help, or find another member to take your place as manager. That is one reason it is a good practice to have a co-manager. It isn't a requirement, but a suggestion to have some help in case you have an emergency, or need to groom someone to take over the group.

Manager's perspective

Becoming a manager can promote your own career, if you want it to. It will increase your own skills and people will come to consider you a leader in your community. It could help you make more money and you may get some really nice perks from Adobe. This can go to your head and some have even become power hungry, but don't let that

happen to you. The people that became managers because they have heard of all the perks and/or thrive on power don't last long. The members' needs should always be the number one focus, not you. Doing what's best for them will pay you back ten fold. You are there to serve their needs. You are there to facilitate the meetings, not lead each one. The one underlying factor for the majority of the user group managers is passion. We are a passionate about sharing knowledge, our members and Adobe. We are the poised to make a difference in our community because of this passion. We tend to volunteer for too many things. We run the meetings, we help out at other events, the list goes on, so know your limits., and don't let it burn you out too fast.

Delegation of duties: Co-Managers and - who does what?

With having a Co-manager, we technically have someone to help out. Each Manager chooses the role a Co-Managers plays, so this will vary greatly from group to group. When it comes down to it, the main Manager makes the decisions. (more on Co-Managers later in this guide)

Getting volunteers can be one of the hardest things for some Managers. One suggestion from a Manager who never has this problem is not actually asking in general for volunteers. Go straight to the people you think could help and ask them specifically. Tell them why you want them to help. It's usually because they are good at something, so compliment them. They could turn you down, but then they'll know you respect them, and that can never hurt membership.

If you do have volunteers/advisor's/board members beyond a Co-Manager, make sure everyone knows what their job is. Even the day of the meeting there is a lot to do. It's hard to do, even with a Co-Manager, so decide who's greeting the members as they come in, etc. before hand. Let people know what specific needs you have, and you'll get more volunteers. Give each person a job and there won't be any issues at the meeting and the members will enjoy themselves without knowing how it all came together.

The benefits of your groups association with Adobe

There are many other types of groups besides Adobe user groups. PHP, Java, JS, Mac, graphic, and just plain web groups, so what makes us different is we are supported by a company who knows our power in the community, and actually helps us help them. Adobe gives us the tools to run a successful group, giving us managers some fantastic perks we can use to make our groups better than those other groups. Being associated with Adobe gives your group and you credibility.

It will help you, and potential future events if you make friends with the other group leaders in your town. It will make your life easier when planning a camp, conference or unconference if you can get help promoting and running those events.

Logistics:

The Where, When, What and How of User Group Meeting Planning

The First Meeting:

Your first meeting is important, but don't try too hard. One of the managers put it nicely, "If you build it, they will come". Nope, not a line out of a movie, but good solid advice. In other words, you don't need to make the first meeting an official meeting. This is the perfect time for getting members to participate in planning their group. Getting sponsors is just one example of something your members can help with. Will members help you build the groups web site? What day and times are best for your members, etc. Having a survey handy to get their opinions right off the bat isn't a bad way to start. Asking for help isn't the sign of a weak leader. Letting them help will let them know it's their group, and set up things for the future when they are complacent to let you lead and you need some help. Figure out all the logistics that first night, so you can get to the business of a normal meeting by your second meeting.

And beyond

Try and have several meetings planned out to better let your members plan ahead. Many groups plan out the entire year at a time, but at least a few months in advance will let the members plan ahead. The main suggestion here is that it is the members group, so always listen to what questions they are asking at meetings because that can be a great way to come up with topics for future meetings. It is not a bad idea to take meeting notes so you can find good information like that from meetings.

60 minutes, 2 hours, 3? How long should your meetings be? That is up to you and your members, but make sure it is consistent whatever you do. Keep to the time agreed upon. If you say the meeting begins at 6pm, have it start at 6 sharp. Also not a bad idea give them some time to socialize before the actual meeting. It can be hard to get members to talk, so a suggestion would be to always make time for an introduction period before the presentation starts. If you have a share recent news before your meeting use that to get the members to talk to one another. The more the group feels comfortable talking to each other, the better the networking. Remind them of that. This is a great opportunity to exchange skills and thoughts. Depending on venue, another suggestion might be to carefully plan when pizza and refreshments arrive so as to not disturb a speaker. Make sure refreshments come before the presentation and not during.

Remember you can't do everything, well maybe you can, but if people volunteer to help, let them. One problem that happens is someone volunteers, so you let them, but you don't keep communicating. After all you are busy running the group. After awhile, they stop doing as much, then stop all together, and sometimes even stop coming to meetings. What happened is you need to keep communicating with any volunteer, advisor and /or board members to keep them interested and feeling useful. You may have last say over the group, but you may be standing there alone at the end too. Keep communicating but also don't over communicate. Meaning, don't email them so much that they feel they are getting spammed. All things in moderation.

Venue

Finding a suitable place for meetings is easier than you think. There are plenty of places more than happy to host your meetings. If you don't have one, try other training facilities, community centers, your own work place, high schools or colleges. Some groups use a more social approach and have their meetings in a club/restaurant in a meeting room.

Some companies and even some sponsors will help out with a meeting place. If you are an education group, lucky you since you don't have to worry about a meeting place.

Here are a few things to consider about meeting spaces:

- ✿ Do you have a projector, or do you need one provided?
- ✿ Internet connection. Will you be recording meetings? If so, you'll want a hard wired connection, not Wi-Fi.
- ✿ What size group do you expect on a regular basis? How much seating do you need?
- ✿ Will you ever hold classes? Does each person need a computer in front of them?

Times for your meetings will just have to be a group effort. You will simply pick the most common time, it's that simple. The only consideration might be whether it's a lunch hour, Saturday, morning or evening. If it's evening, there are many of us who have tried different times. The only suggestion there is to allow some time for setting up and getting a good connection. While you or someone else is making sure the meeting will go smoothly technically, give the members some time to network. If they seem too shy to do this on their own, try some news, or a recent question to spark some conversation. If you personally have to set things up, make sure there is someone to greet the members as they enter the room. Make sure there is also good signage so members know which room they are to enter. You don't want them wandering halls.

Food and/or drinks

Depending on your venue you need to decide if you or a sponsor is going to provide food and/or drinks at your meeting. This is a great way for sponsors to help support a group. Many will sponsor everything or if you have a large group, or sponsors may provide just one element. Some sponsors are willing to give a monetary amount instead of calling in pizza or sandwiches. Then it's up to you to figure out food and drinks, but that's great. Most of the time it's on a month to month basis though, where they call in the refreshment because they need to keep track of the receipts. Nothing wrong with that. If alcohol is served, observe local serving and sponsoring laws. If alcohol is present, then students (High School and College) are prohibited from attending your meetings and you are limiting membership.

Many of the groups socialize, so either have their meeting first, then everyone goes out for food, or some as mentioned above, have their meeting place at somewhere social like a restaurant or club. Many restaurants have a room for larger groups so this works out well. The only drawback is someone would have to supply a projector and perhaps something to project it on.

To due or not to due.

Most, lets say 98% of the groups do not accept any money. It's a legal issue for some of us because in some states you have to be a true non-profit to accept dues. Plus, lets face it — it's fairly easy to find a sponsor to help you pay for things. Having a free group has it's benefits and the members will love it. There is nothing wrong however if you do become a non-profit, or have a business that allows you to accept dues. Obviously, accepting dues will help fund the group. There is also the thought of getting what you pay for. Some groups will just thrive because they feel more apart of a group they help fund. Which way is up to you and what serves your group. Groups that don't accept dues typically have a donation box to help get extra money for their group.

Becoming a 503(c)(3), non-profit will also limit you in the number or types of activities that your group can participate in. It can also require filing fees of > \$1000 after all is done.

Delegation of duties: Who does what?

Which brings us to whether your group is a total dictatorship or you have a board of people to help out. When it comes down to it, you make the decisions, but there is nothing wrong in having others help you out. Some managers do it entirely alone. Some have a few regular volunteers, and others have a full fledged boards. Others have a few members that help out, advisor's if you will, and some even have a co-manager.

Getting volunteers can be one of the hardest things for some managers. One suggestion from a manager who never has this problem is not actually asking in general for volunteers. Go straight to the people you think could help and ask them specifically. Tell them why you want them to help. It's usually because they are good at something, so compliment them. They could turn you down, but then they'll know you respect them, and that can never hurt membership.

If you do have volunteers/advisor's/board members, make sure everyone knows what their job is. Even the day of the meeting there is a lot to do. It's hard to do it all yourself, and while you are getting the technical issues ironed out, who's greeting the members as they come in, etc. These are things others can help with. Let people know what specific needs you have, and you'll get more volunteers. Give each person a job and there won't be any issues at the meeting and the members will enjoy themselves without knowing how it all came together.

M2M

M2M or Manager 2 Manager meetings are for you. They are through Connect, or in person at a Summit, but the idea is they are a place for managers to ask other managers questions, share ideas and network. They are typically once a month, on the first Monday. We try to have different times they are offered so managers around the world can attend. The topics are created by you, the managers. We can have a general meeting with multiple topics to learning sessions on how to be a good speaker, or utilizing Connect or anything you would like. Email dee@d2wc.com to suggest topics, and the meeting url is <http://experts.adobeconnect.com/m2m>

Speakers

You have the meeting space and time, so now it's time for speakers. Getting speakers is a huge problem for some groups, while others have a wide selection in their community for speakers. If you have the skills and like to speak (as many of us do) there is nothing wrong with you being the first speaker. Remember one thing about speakers; the topic is the most important thing. Someone doesn't have to be the most dynamic speaker if the material he/she has is good, and it's a topic the members are interested in. Surveymonkey.com and other survey sites, and paper surveys are a great way to poll your members about the type of topics they are wanting.

Considering speakers are the number one problem in most groups, what can you do about this? A suggestion is to include what the members skills are when doing the survey so you know who has what skills. OK, so you know what members you can try and pull into the speaking pool, what else? Look to the local training facilities. Any company that works with whatever technology your group represents would love to speak. If your group can afford it, speakers from out of town are a way to bring in lots of new members along with ones you haven't seen in a while.

If out of town speakers are out of the question, then ask your local staffing agency. If they aren't already a sponsor, they can serve multiple purposes and can help find a good speaker for the group. If you have good local sponsors, they can also help in bringing people in from out of town. On the Community Hub is a list of speakers. They can be brought into town, or you can have a speaker do an Connect meeting online and even members at home can participate.

Recording Presentations

Unless you have a large group to pool talent for speakers from (or are in Adobe's neighborhood) there are times that getting speakers are still difficult. Charlie Arehart runs a ColdFusion online group, and he has a wonderful repository of recorded meetings that are mostly, but not only CF related. Any manager that records a CF meeting is encouraged to put their recordings at www.carehart.org/ugtv/. Many of the managers put their recorded meetings up there for others to use.

Recording presentations through Acrobat Connect isn't a requirement, but your members will appreciate it. When you record your meetings members not in attendance can join in via a URL you set up before hand. They can ask questions of the presenter and feel like they are apart of the meeting almost as if they were there. We all get an account to record meetings and your Program manager will make the meeting permanent for you after you contact him after the meeting.

Sponsors

We could spend pages and pages on this topic alone. This is another thing that some groups have a hard time with, local sponsors. Lets face it, running a user group can get expensive if you try and do it all yourself. Do you have food at your meetings? If so, who pays for it? This is best decided right away. Depending on the type of group you have, it might be easier getting sponsors to help pay for things than you think. Recruiting agencies like TekSystems are surprisingly eager to help you pay for things. Depending if your group is of interest to a staffing agency, in return for a few minutes of the groups time talking about their staffing needs, some agencies are happy to help pay for things. It helps you, and they have a place to get new talent. If that offends you in any way, some regular companies are also happy to help, but don't be surprised if it's basically for the same reason.

What other types of sponsors can you get? Don't forget the sponsor who helps with a meeting place. How about a sponsor for printed materials. Maybe you need a banner, or cards to hand out to get new members, or fliers. What can you give these people in return? Your web site/meetup page/wherever your members can find you is a great place for banner ads, or a nice page highlighting the sponsors themselves. Some sponsors will take care of everything, while others will take care if one element, like food. Many of the non local sponsors will insist on this anyway, like Lynda.com, O'Reilly, Peachpit and the like.

Hosting your own website

There is nothing to say if you have the skills, not to create your own website. There is a variety of hosting available. HostMedia (<http://www.hostmedia.co.uk/>) are a great supporter of Adobe groups and professionals in the UK and Europe and will help you setup a hosting environment, potentially at a discounted rate.

How to get the word out

You'll need a place to gather the members information, send out your meeting information and make the sponsors happy, a web site or at least a place on the web to display this information.

We'll start with the quickest solution. Yahoo and Google groups. These are free and super fast to set up. In no time you can have your group up, have survey polls, and have your members talking with one another. If you have a graphic group and don't have the immediate skills to create a web site, these are not a bad way to get the message out. They both have a calendar, but Google groups lets you search other groups as well. The problem with some of these groups is the ads. When you send an email, it is full of ads, and members will get tired of that soon.

Some groups already have a person who might volunteer to help in that department. Some people just know how to get the word out and get some much needed press for your group. Listings in the local paper, and at local colleges more will help grow your group. Yes if you build a group they will come, but it takes effort to keep the excitement up about a user group. It takes new blood every now and then to keep it growing. Don't underestimate the need for marketing your group.

Even something as simple as giving small fliers to members to hand out can generate new members. You can make it attractive for members to hand out by putting a number on the back and when a new member comes to their first meeting, they bring this and the member that gave it to them gets a prize. Of course there are many, ways of going about this. Some groups have done this with group business cards and it works very well for them. Get a sponsor to make them, and hand out 20 to every member who comes to the meetings. (just a suggestion)

Lists: Adobe user group manager list

Everyone who is a manager has access to the lists. There is an announce list for the Community Program managers to send out announcements to the different types of groups. This is the way for them to tell us about special events, and Tech Wednesdays. Tech Wednesdays help keep us informed on the latest and greatest technology. The Wednesday part gives away the day of the week they are on, and they last for one hour usually around 10:00am PST. (Of course they are open to all English speaking countries) A lot of the time the content is covered by NDA, but many times they can be shared right away with your group, or after an announcement. When in doubt, always ask if you are planning on blogging or sharing info you've learned either via the list or a tech Wednesday. After, they are placed on the Community Hub. The basic rule is if they have a link, they can be shared.

List, and common sense Protocol

The other list is a chat list, or general discussion list. This is where we can ask questions and get advice from other Managers/Co-Managers. There is an unwritten protocol for the chat list, but you'll notice not all play by those rules. If the Program Manager sends out an announcement, and you aren't sure if you can share the information, ask him or her first, and not your fellow Managers/Co-Managers. The call is up to him/her, not the rest of us. If the Program Manager sends out an announcement, read this e-mail carefully first before you ask questions. If the question is relevant, ask them specifically and not the list. If at any time you have a question that is, or should be directed at another user group manager and you don't know their email address, ask the Program manager rather than send a response back to the list. There is nothing wrong with responding to another persons message, just read the message carefully before responding in a friendly manner.

You may subscribe via e-mail to both the announce and chat list, or just view them on the prerelease site.

<http://prerelease.adobe.com>

Encouraging Community participation both as a group and individually

Your group is a community. Encouraging that community is your job as a user group manager. There are a variety of ways you can accomplish that.

Blogging

Many managers are both Adobe Community Professionals as well as managers and maybe be also Adobe Education Leaders (AEL's). Others are managers because of their skills and level of notoriety in their community. Those managers may already have a blog, but that shouldn't stop you if you don't happen to fall into that category. You can use a blog to promote ideas, you can use a blog to promote your meetings and discuss the meeting afterwards. This may be a great way to connect with your members and let them get to know you and your level of passion about the group and Adobe. There are lots of different blog software/websites out there to choose from.

Meetup

Meetup.com is something a lot of user group managers use. It does have a fee attached (\$45 when this was written), but with that fee you can have up to 3 meetup groups. If you have other groups in the area this is an opportunity to share the cost. Meetup has a lot of benefits and features like being able to message all the members, manage your meetings and through the keywords you add when creating the group, it makes it easy for other people to find your group. They add new features all the time.

Facebook, and other social networks

Facebook like Twitter has increased the public outlet for your group and your meetings. Some have actual groups on Facebook and some just announce their meetings on there. It certainly isn't mandatory, but if you are already a Facebook member, consider announcing your meeting there. (We have several groups just for us on Facebook, including Team NDA, for all Adobe Community Leaders)

LinkedIn

While LinkedIn is a professional network, there is an Adobe User Group Manager group on there where you can link to other Managers/Co-Managers, and a Adobe Community Program leaders group where both ACP's and UGM's and AELs can talk. Several groups use it as another forum for members to talk, add articles and have discussions.

Forums

This is a great way for the members to discuss topics without a list. Some people are annoyed with a list if some members take advantage and discuss things not necessarily on topic. They will want to be on digest or completely off a chat list if this happens. A forum lets everyone participate at their own leisure. Like blogs, forum software comes in many forms and a simple search will let you pick from many different kinds.

Speaking

This topic isn't about speaking at your own meetings, but other groups. The best way to evangelize Adobe product, and your user group is for you to speak at other groups events and meetings. If you are particularly versed in something others would be interested in, share that with your Program manager so he/she can put you on the speaker list.

Attracting & Retaining User Group Members

After you have your group's infrastructure set up, the next step is attracting and retaining members. Below you will find suggestions on how to achieve that.

The Basics:

- ✿ Updated web site that always clearly shows the date, location, time, topic and presenter for your next meeting. People will generally do not return to an outdated site so be sure to always keep your site information current.
- ✿ Standard meeting date and time if possible (some managers will not have the luxury of deciding when and where they meet if they are using donated space that is only available at a certain time).
- ✿ Location? Is it convenient for the majority of your members?
- ✿ Timing? Is it convenient for the majority of your members? Evenings, weekends... what do the members want?
- ✿ Make sure you are leveraging every program resource possible.
- ✿ If there is another Adobe user group in your area with a different focus, still be sure to link back to each other's groups and cross promote.

Be cognizant of the difference between marketing the existence of your group (hey world, we exist) and marketing the value proposition of your group (why folks should want to get involved).

Some reasons that people might want get involved with your group:

- ✿ Networking opportunities with like-minded local professionals.
- ✿ Technical information and presentations.
- ✿ Stay current on the latest and greatest at Adobe.
- ✿ Deepen your current skill set and/or learn something new.
- ✿ Cool raffle items and software giveaways.
- ✿ Fun! Or at least it should be.

How/where to market the existence of your group and the value your group provides:

Local web groups (can be Adobe groups, but don't have to be) – cross link, cross promote, joint meetings if/when applicable, social events involving larger tech community.

- ✿ Meetup.com technology groups – tons of Adobe or web des/dev focused Meetup.com groups out there.
- ✿ Colleges and Universities – lots have web, des/dev groups on campus and most use Adobe products.
- ✿ Local list serves (if any exist).
- ✿ Local Adobe Partners

Is there an Adobe event coming to town? Email your program contact to see about getting your group some exposure at the event.

- ✿ Membership drives – contests (ex: prize for the member who brings the most new attendees for a certain meeting), special events or activities.

- ✿ Word of mouth – specifically ask every member to become evangelists for the group. Tell them to spread the word to co-workers, friends, family, etc... anyone who uses Adobe products is a potential member!
- ✿ **Software raffle – use this to drive participation and attendance; see below for ideas.
- ✿ Local organizations that have a lot of internal Adobe users (again, members can play a role here.)
- ✿ You know your area better than me... what other potential places would local Adobe users be hiding?

And getting them to your meeting is only half the battle... now you have to keep them coming back! Great content is only half the battle (but ultimately, content is king!)

- ✿ Continually solicit feedback from members... it is their group, what do THEY want out of it? Are you scheduling presentations and demos that are of interest to your members and at their skill level? Of course you cannot please everyone at every meeting, but if your group consists of 80% web design beginners and you are presenting advanced developer topics, you won't have many members for long. Do you meet on weekends when everyone in the group would prefer a week night?
- ✿ Get to know your members and make sure they get to know each other. The meetings shouldn't feel like a bunch of strangers sitting together in a room once a month. Unfortunately, it is the job of the manager to be personable, excited, outgoing and upbeat. If you aren't, why should you expect your members to be?
- ✿ Key is to make it feel like it is THEIR group... not just something they attend once a month. Get them vested, involved. Maybe spin up a project for a local charity where you build something pro bono as a group?
- ✿ List serve (Google or Yahoo list...) for constant communication; note that there is a fine line between communication and spam. Push out only important info and keep back and forth discussions to a minimum. Adobe news, group news, special news, meeting announcements, etc... not, "hey, what does everyone think of Flash CS3." Plus, it is easier to get someone to commit to a list and then once they see the great meeting topics and information available, they are more apt to come out and attend a meeting physically.
- ✿ Get some of your members involved in the running of the group. Nothing keeps a group healthier than having a solid core of group of regulars. Assistance can come in many forms... speakers, help with web site updates, getting sponsors, looking for new meeting space, etc... be cautious not to overload anyone... small, manageable tasks, especially at first.

Software Raffle Ideas:

**It is recommended that groups hold a running contest for the duration of the software period where members earn raffle tickets and at the end of the period you draw from those tickets to determine your winner. For example, members could earn 1 raffle ticket for every meeting they attend during the duration of the contest, 1 ticket for bringing a first time member, 5 tickets for finding a speaker, 10 tickets for actually speaking at a meeting; you could award a 5 ticket bonus to any member that has perfect attendance for the duration of the contest, 3 tickets for bringing refreshments to a meeting or sponsoring pizza/drinks. The ideas are endless as to how attendees can earn tickets, and this method of raffling the software encourages both attendance and participation, while also giving your most active members the best chance of winning the software.

Reviving a dying group

Sometimes as the manager of a group you may have periods of time where you are inconsistent with meetings and communication. Sometimes your personal or professional life may get in the way. Don't feel bad. Make certain that your co-manager and the members of your group know what is going on. Communication is critical for preventing a user group from dying. Please do not let the status of being a community leader or the perks that Adobe offers prevent you from doing the right thing. The main thing you should always remember is the group belongs to the members. If you have done your job and made the members feel like it is their group, you will have an easier time getting volunteers. People will step in along with your co-manager to help run meetings or take over the group.

If you became user group manager of a group that was dying a slow painful death, this section is for you.

The need to reform a dormant user group happens more than anyone wants to admit. Many groups do not have a limit on how long someone can be manager, so sometimes the group's manager becomes burnt out before they make

way for a new manager. Meetings and communication become inconsistent, attendance drops and no one seems into the meetings anymore. How do you bring new life into a group like this?

If you take over a group from a manager who floundered, please refrain from disparaging them. There is nothing to be gained by this and everything to lose. Let the members know there is a new manager in the most positive way possible. Tell them your plans for the group and act like it is a brand new group. You may even want to change the name (if appropriate) to suggest a new beginning. If not a new name, then maybe a contest for a new logo, or web site. Engage the members and ask for their suggestions.

The members of the group may have lost the sense that they have a say in what happens to the group. This is the perfect time to pull out all the stops, get sponsors, and bring speakers in from out of town.

Adobe Camps Program Overview

The Adobe Camps program supports small regional events that align with Adobe's vision for digital media and digital marketing solutions. The program drives Adobe thought leadership in technologies that create ground-breaking digital content and deploy it across media and devices to achieve greater business success. Adobe Camps are about sharing knowledge, building community and showcasing the skills of local developers and designers.

Program Benefits

For Adobe

- ✿ Significant reach to audiences who are looking to network and improve their knowledge of Adobe products, services and technologies.
- ✿ An innovative, distinctive and memorable event that introduces attendees to specific Adobe technologies that make them successful in digital marketing and digital media.
- ✿ Feedback from attendees on the technologies presented and the value of the content.

Benefits for the Camp

Use of Adobe branding and messaging to inform the community.

- ✿ Help promoting the event through key Adobe channels.
- ✿ Help finding speakers and influencers who are experts in technology that Adobe supports.
- ✿ Funding support where possible for venues, food, logistics and other needs.
- ✿ Access to roadmaps and other public information on key Adobe developer technologies.

To apply for a camp in your area, visit our Camps Website at:

<http://adobecamp.groups.adobe.com>

Terminology:

Program Manager: The person responsible for the User Groups. When in question about something, ask the Program manager first.

UG: User Group

AUG: Adobe User Group

UGM: User Group Manager

AUGM: Adobe User Group Manager

M2M: Manager 2 Manager meeting

ACP or Adobe Community Professional: People who are proficient in a particular Adobe software. They can be a great speaker resource.

NDA: Non-disclosure agreement

AEL: Adobe Education Leader

CC: Creative Cloud