



## Signature Participation Project (SPP)

### IDEA STARTER

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Uncovering the right SPP for your ministry requires looking at your work from a number of angles. This worksheet is designed to walk you through a number of ways of looking at your cause to help identify or strengthen your SPP. Some of these may not even apply to you, and that's ok. This is about brainstorming and resisting the urge to squash an idea before you've really considered it (avoid the "Yes, but" for now). In each category below, answer the first question and then consider the second question for possible inspiration for your SPP. The examples in each category may provide some inspiration.

#### IF THEY COULD JUST ...

1. What do you find yourself saying you wish every champion could experience? Consider how you would fill in these blanks:

When people know \_\_\_\_\_ they are hooked on this cause.

When people hear \_\_\_\_\_ they are hooked on this cause.

When people meet \_\_\_\_\_ they are hooked on this cause.

2. **UNCOVERING THE SPP OPPORTUNITY:** Consider opportunities for champions to do, know, hear or meet your answers from the above questions.

#### EXAMPLE:

- *Medical Teams International* knows not all of their champions can go to the developing world and see the work firsthand. So, they developed a Real Life exhibit where visitors can "step into" places they serve, like a medical triage clinic after a typhoon in the Philippines and a garbage dump in Mexico where people live.

#### IF THEY ONLY UNDERSTOOD ...

1. What do you wish people understood about the cause and those you serve? What is the most common objection to your work or misconception about the cause and those you serve?

2. **UNCOVERING THE SPP OPPORTUNITY:** Is there an activity champions could do that would make that come alive for them?

#### EXAMPLE:

- A ministry that works with victims of domestic violence and abuse recovery often gets the response, "Why doesn't she just leave?" When asked the questions above, they wish people understood that it just isn't that simple. Often, leaving means giving up income and housing. It might mean her kids might have to change schools. So, the ministry might use that as a starting point for a potential SPP and design an SPP experience that makes that challenge come alive for potential champions.
- An organization that provides clothing and coats for school-age children wishes people understood how the families they serve are much like their own families and want the same things for their children. So, they designed an SPP where people could volunteer to serve in the "store" where these families could select items they needed. They discovered the process of helping find a new coat in the right size together with the parents and children changed perceptions more than statistics or even stories ever could



## CHANGE THE ENCOUNTER

1. How do people encounter those you serve? Where do people encounter those you serve?
2. **UNCOVERING THE SPP OPPORTUNITY:** Consider opportunities to influence or use that encounter to engage new champions.

### EXAMPLE:

- Several ministries to the homeless ask champions to pack bags of toiletries and other supplies to give to homeless people when they encounter them on the street.
- *Big Table*, a Spokane (WA)-based ministry serves people in the restaurant and hospitality industry. They recognize that nearly every day their champions likely encounter the people the ministry serves. So, they elected to launch an SPP called “Unexpected 20s” where people put a \$20 bill in special envelope and give it to someone working in a restaurant or hotel as a boost or encouragement. This encourages champions to really see people who might otherwise be invisible, and to make the effort to get to know them. <http://www.big-table.com/unexpected-20s/>

## THINK SMALL

1. Consider the big change you’re seeking to make in the world, and identify just one way you do that (that’s a bite-sized ministry chunk). What does it take to do that one thing? What obstacles prevent you from accomplishing/offering more? Repeat these questions for 3 or 4 different bite-sized ministry chunks.
2. **UNCOVERING THE SPP OPPORTUNITY:** Consider opportunities for champions to do something that removes obstacles or supplies specific resources needed to accomplish that one thing (your bite-sized ministry chunk).

### EXAMPLES:

- One way a ministry to low-income families is doing their work is providing school supplies for students starting school. That takes a backpack and supplies. For them, backpacks are the hardest to come by, so donating a backpack would make a great SPP. Leverage it by asking champions to include an encouraging note or inviting champions to participate in an event to deliver the backpacks.
- One way a ministry to women with unplanned pregnancies is doing their work is providing baby items to mothers who elect to keep their babies. The only thing that keeps them from doing more is having enough items, especially diapers, to give. So, baby showers or diaper drives could make great SPPs.



## LOOK TO OPERATIONS FOR INSPIRATION

1. What everyday things are you spending time and money on that champions could assist with (i.e. diapers, ingredients for meals, etc.)? What things are you (or staff) doing for those you serve that perhaps others could do?
2. **UNCOVERING THE SPP OPPORTUNITY:** Consider opportunities to use those expenditures or activities to engage new champions.

### EXAMPLES:

- A ministry in Oregon provides foster families with foster children ages 0-5 with clothing, diapers and other necessary items. When they looked at their operations, they realized they were spending a lot of time and resources laundering and folding donated clothing. So, they're working on an SPP where people can grab a bag of donated clothes, wash them and return them folded. We are working with them on adding a giving component and even considering a micro-event at a laundromat where a group launders, folds and sorts the clothes together.
- A ministry in Washington that provides horse therapy for abused children looked at their budget and saw they were spending money on carrots and apples because the children loved giving them as treats to their horses. The ministry always struggled with connecting champions to the work because of privacy issues. But, guess what? Any champion can buy carrots and apples, so they built an SPP around that, asking champions to fill treat bags for the horses.

## WHAT'S ALREADY WORKING?

1. What activities are most effectively connecting or strengthening the connection of champions to the cause? (Consider giving, learning, praying, serving and sharing activities).
2. **UNCOVERING THE SPP OPPORTUNITY:** Is there an existing activity above that could become an SPP?

### EXAMPLE:

- A ministry that provides homes, education and support for teen girls rescued from sex trafficking realized that when a champion responded to a specific need for a specific girl, the champion was more likely to remain engaged. So, they're working to design an SPP around that, offering opportunities for people to do things like buying a girl the birthday gift she said she wanted, or providing a manicure when one of the girls is invited to the prom. (*Hint: this one also can be leveraged into a micro-event strategy*).
- A ministry to the homeless realized many of their champions first came in to serve meals. So, they built an SPP experience around that, being more deliberate about the way champions are invited, encouraging champions to invite their friends, and then doing carefully-planned follow-up.



## NOT SO FAST

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1. What idea have you dismissed because it isn't an efficient way to deliver your programs or services, but that might be meaningful for champions? Consider it again, suspending judgement on efficiency and evaluating its potential for champion growth.

### **EXAMPLES:**

- *Habitat for Humanity* has champions join them in building homes. Lots of unskilled laborers is not an efficient way to build houses, but when they consider the broader impact of people who have their own story about the house they helped build, they wouldn't do it any other way.
- *Christian Resources International* ships Bibles and Christian resources around the globe, usually in massive crates or containers. To give champions an opportunity to DO the ministry as well, they launched Operation Bare Your Bookshelf, asking champions to ship an extra Bible directly to a pastor in the developing world. Not an efficient or cost-effective way to get a Bible to that pastor, but giving the champion a story about shipping a Bible to a specific pastor in a specific country connected many new champions to the cause.

2. What idea have you dismissed because of privacy, specialized skills or training needed to complete it make it not feasible for ordinary champions? Consider it again, trying to find a way around that or carving off portions that champions could do.

### **EXAMPLE:**

- *Royal Family Kids Camp* knows that special training is required to be a counselor at their camp for foster children. But, they also know that the opportunity to see the kids deepened their connection to the cause. Rather than give up, they instead carved off opportunities to serve at camp that didn't require specialized training: be a greeter at registration, serve meals, etc.

3. What idea have you dismissed due to distance between champions and the locations you serve? Consider ways to bridge that gap and bring things closer (i.e. video, authentic meals from locations of service, etc.).

### **EXAMPLE:**

- A ministry that provides clean water, hygiene and sanitation to communities in the developing world knows not all of their champions can go on site to see one a new well. Their SPP is a Water Challenge, asking people to drink nothing but water for two weeks and donate the money they would have spent on beverages. Then, using video and other means, the champions are connected directly to the well their money supported.

