

GRIP

GOLD MEMBER NEWSLETTER



GRIP LEADERSHIP

Term 2 2016

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Below are pictures that our travelling team posted every few hours on Instagram during recent conferences and school seminars.





Highlights

of 2016 Conferences so far



Between February and April approximately 60 conferences were held throughout Australia and New Zealand. The 2016 conference sessions have been very well received from staff and students, with feedback indicating that the sessions have been even more practical and useful than ever. If you have not yet experienced a 2016 conference you can watch a quick highlights video to give you a taste of what will be coming to you soon.

www.gripleadership.com.au/video

5 Tips to Help Busy Teachers Provide Maximum Support to Student Leaders

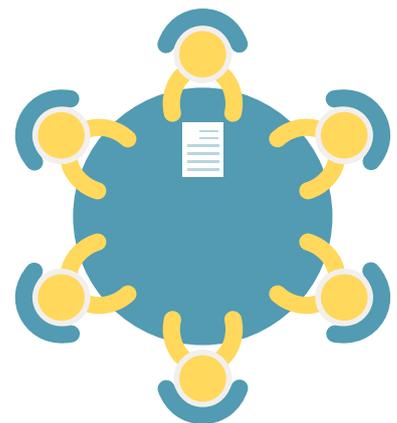
By Ronan McGinniss

Are you often busy? I rarely meet a teacher who isn't! I often relate the full load of a teacher to the feeling of having a full stomach whilst only part way through meal. There always seems to be room for dessert, but the healthy vegetable side dish is often left untouched to the side of the plate. When a teacher is overloaded it is often things that we know are healthy (like like working with student leaders) that get left untouched for a while, much like the side dish.

It would be too far-fetched for me to suggest that I can provide tips to lighten your load as a teacher. What I can do however, is recommend the following **five tips to continually support your student leaders, despite the inevitable busyness.**

Have meetings more - rather than less

Often when teachers strike a busy time, the routine they have adopted with the student leaders is thrown out or put on the back-burner. There is often a temptation to cancel a couple of meetings with the intention of picking everything back up when things slow down. The danger of this is that usually all momentum halts, and students become stagnate in their leadership roles. Regaining momentum becomes very difficult and students may go without the necessary support for some time. Even if meetings are only 10 minutes long, a weekly meeting of this length will provide better support to your student leaders than a 30 minute meeting every 3 weeks.



Teach students to run meetings

Following from the previous tip, prepare students to run their own meetings so that they can proceed with a short meeting in your absence, if necessary. Instead of giving a student a quick crash course in meeting management immediately prior to your absence, invest time in advance to teach students the skills they need (regardless of whether or not you intend for them to ever face the situation). Supporting them in advance of your busy phases, will enable you to indirectly support them when your busy time kicks in.

Have a centralised folder available

Human nature seems to push back from fully engaging in experiences that don't seem to connect with the current reality. You may have experienced a meeting or PD day on a topic that seems totally removed from your own situation... they can be difficult. Ensure that when training your student leaders you are not simply asking them to engage in leadership learning that seems lofty, fluffy, or out of context. Relate every aspect of your training to actual school issues and opportunities which the students gravitate to. Whenever we train students at GRIP Leadership events, we ensure that students have identified actual school situations that they intend to contribute to, and we always prioritise focused planning time for this.

Crack down on accountability

Relationships are essential for a student leadership group to have an impact outside of the scheduled team meeting times. Gathering student leaders together for training is a significant opportunity to build relationships. Be intentional about structuring opportunities during training for leaders to build relationships with those outside of their normal friendship group and also with you as their staff coordinator. This doesn't mean just to 'play games' all day. Relationships can be built by a variety of shared experiences such as group sharing, meals, and project planning. In every aspect of your training, consider how to include elements that will build and strengthen relationships.

Assign different mentor teachers to each student leader

Most schools appoint a single teacher to work with a designated student leadership group. This simple structure works well, but is obviously put under pressure when the particular teacher (which could be you) becomes busy. An emerging strategy used by many schools is for each student leader to have a 'mentor teacher' whom they periodically have discussions with regarding their leadership role. These mentor teachers do not need to oversee the tasks of the student leader, but can act as a sounding board and provide advice. This brings another teacher into the picture, which is of huge assistance in supporting student leaders when the predominant coordinator becomes busy at any stage throughout the year.



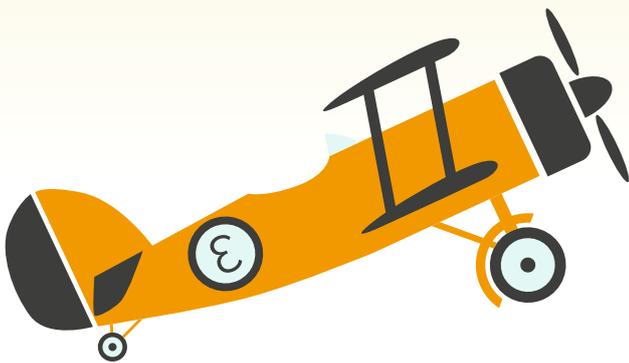
Why Some Leadership Team Projects Never Get Off The Ground...

By Karl Brown

We are very fortunate at GRIP Leadership to work with many student leadership teams from different schools, and one thing that they all share in common is potential. At the beginning of the academic year, a leadership team will often gather and share different ideas about what can (or must) be done this year to leave the right type of legacy. Ideas are thrown onto the table, sifted through, and eventually a draft plan for the year ahead emerges.

The ideas within this plan for activities and projects are excellent – they really engage the school community in meaningful ways, and have the potential to make a significant contribution. However, for a variety of reasons these ideas are never fully realised, and become doomed to stay in that frustrating zone between vision and reality.

With this in mind, here are four key challenges to student leadership projects being realised – and four strategies as to how to practically engage them. You'll notice that the ideas are delivered in pairs, almost like two sides of the same coin.



CHALLENGE #1 THE TEAM IS THINKING TOO BIG

Students can come up with some very inspiring ideas for projects, but at times they can bite off a little more than they can chew. Whether the challenge is budget, project size, community investment, or any other key aspect – sometimes an idea is just too big. There's no shame in admitting that – in fact, it can be one of the best things that happens to a student leadership team. Bringing students down from the realm of reality will ensure that their ideas have traction, and stand a greater chance of being realised.

The strategy: Be the voice of reason. It's important that someone is asking the tough questions about the viability of project ideas. It's not an easy job, and sometimes you might feel a bit like a wet blanket, but it is in the best interest of your leaders (and the wider community) to keep vetting ideas. Try to be solution minded though, and bring alternatives to the table whenever possible to maintain momentum and protect enthusiasm.

CHALLENGE #2 THE TEAM IS THINKING TOO SMALL

On the other side of the coin, sometimes student leaders can lack a little vision, and their project ideas – while very achievable – may end up having very little impact on the wider school community. This is where an intentional staff member can make a valuable investment, by expanding the boundaries of their thinking, and by demonstrating what is possible.

The strategy: Become a visionary. That may sound a little grandiose, but a well-timed shot of vision can do wonders for your leadership team. With the rapid advances of modern media, it's never been easier to show your students what can be possible. A few minutes of work finding videos from other schools and footage from community events that align with your

...and 4 Ways to Make it Happen!

team's project can be just the thing to get them thinking bigger!

CHALLENGE #3 THE PROJECT IS LIGHT ON DETAIL

Some teams excel at the 'big picture' aspect of events – dreaming the dream as it were – but projects can easily fall over or fizzle out if no one is looking after the details. It's wonderful if your students come up with an innovative and engaging idea for charity fundraising, but such a project will always need team members who are committed to the details.

The strategy: Understand your team's gifts. There will be a range of personality types within your leadership team, and some will be naturally inclined towards a task/details approach, while others will sit further along the visionary end of the spectrum. By identifying your 'details' team members early, you can make a sound investment in the success of the whole team's project, and at the same time provide an opportunity for those who are not naturally detail-oriented to learn and grow by watching others.

CHALLENGE #4 THE PROJECT IS HEAVY ON DETAILS

Once again, the other side of the coin can be equally problematic. From time to time, teams can become mired in the minutia of a project, and can no longer see the forest for the trees. If you've ever sat through a fourth straight meeting about what colour the senior formal invitation background card should be – then you've experienced this problem first-hand!

The strategy: Set deadlines. If your student leaders know that various decisions need to be made by a certain stage of the project, then they will be more inclined to maintain a sense of perspective. Instead of students getting caught up in

unimportant aspects of a project (like the colour of the card), remind them about the decision deadlines, and encourage them to move forward with other aspects of their planning & preparation. You may meet a little resistance here and there, but once the event is underway, all will (hopefully) be forgiven!



Within each of these areas, balance is the key. Knowing and understanding your team personally will allow you to make wise choices as to the application of these strategies, which in turn will help their projects to move beyond merely being possible to becoming highly probable. Good luck!

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GRIP NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CAMP

SYDNEY



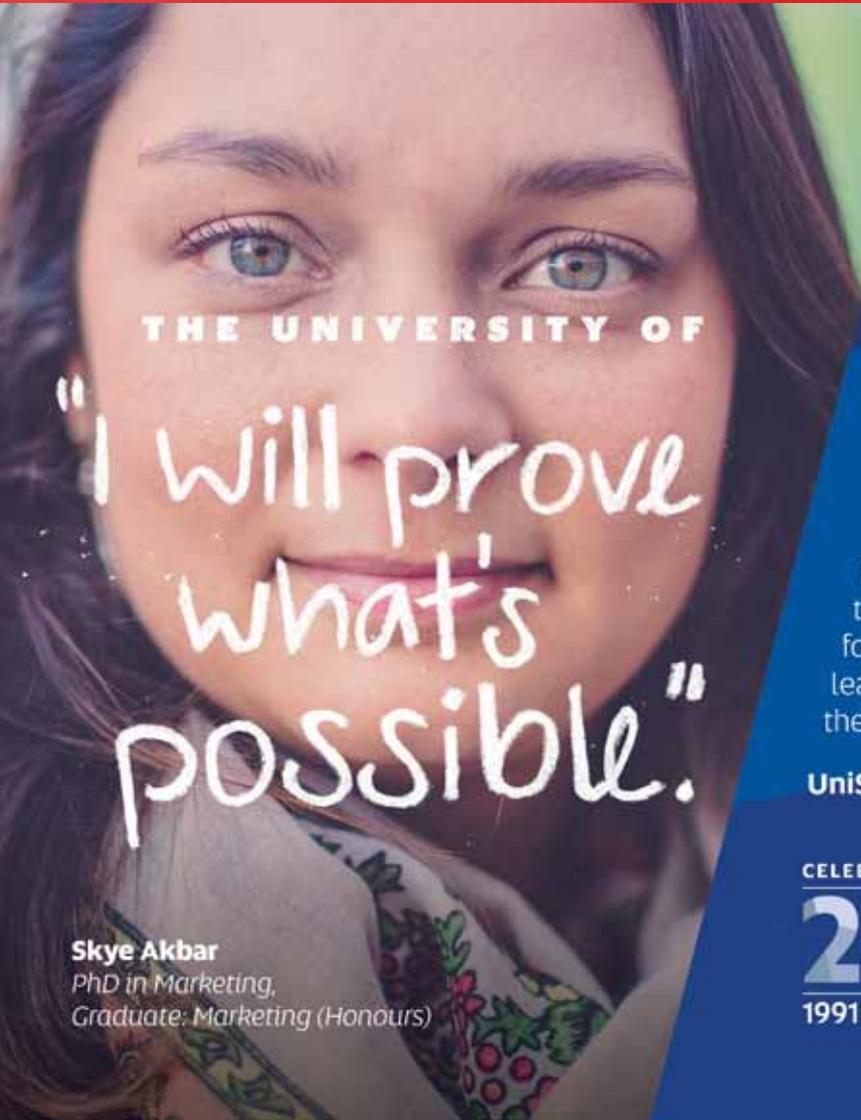
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