

Short guide for the discontented



Booklet 2

Tools within a collective (for the experienced)



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Thanks to Bérangère CHARTAUD for her English translation.

To whom?

This short guide is addressed to active collectives aiming at facilitating their orderly functioning.

It gives tips (tools and advice) to dodge any classical problems within a collective.

The tools that are presented aim at:

- Stepping back and realise what is missing;
- Developing a collective memory;
- Avoid repeating blunders;
- Facilitating implementations;
- Facilitating the induction of newcomers.



This booklet 2 from the «Short guide for the discontented» is addressed to the absolute beginners. The pros of management and self-management will probably not learn much from this booklet 2...

The original version was created by a left-wing free-culture advocate, you will notice some incitement to share under a free spirit throughout the text. There...that's that, you've been warned!

This guide is under a free licence, anyone can contribute to its improvement.

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Members

Volunteers



The members are volunteers.

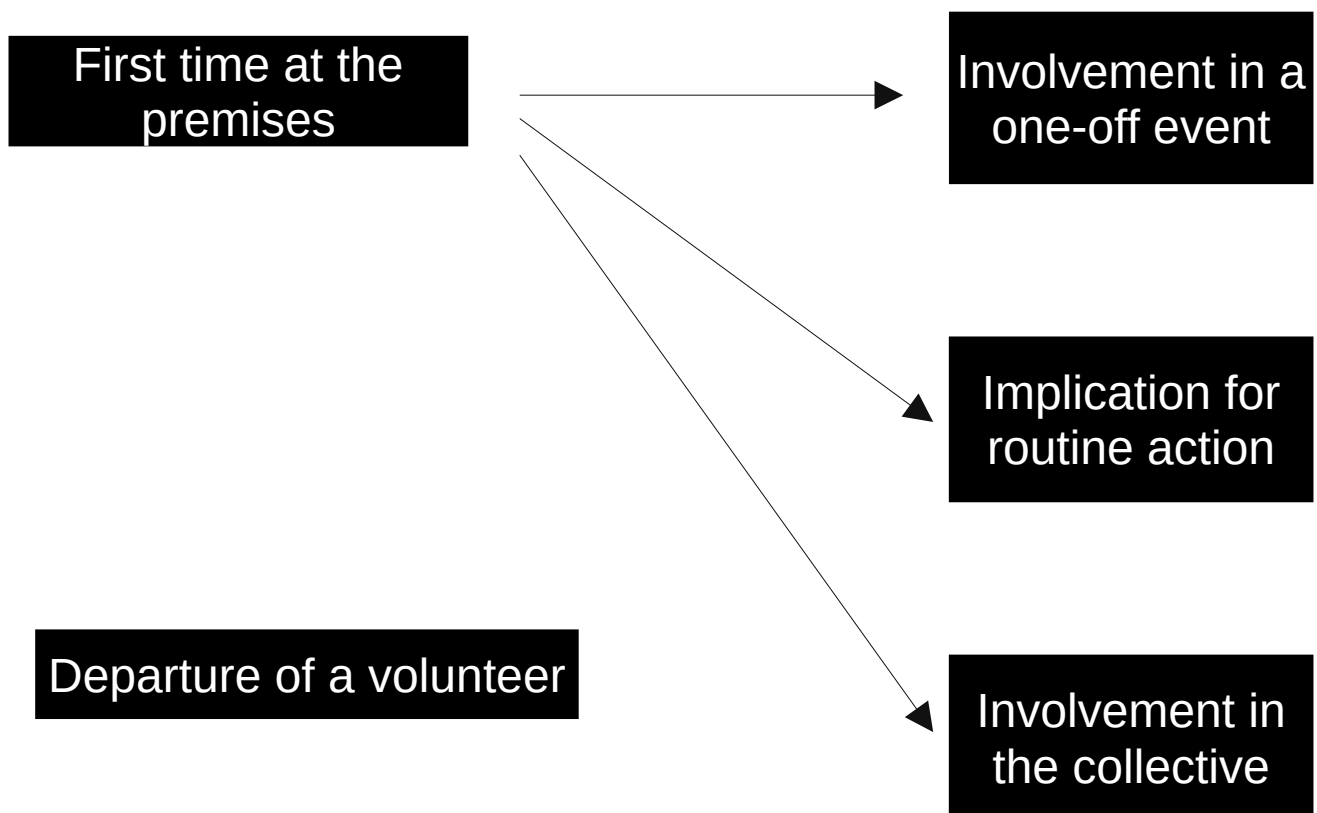
In The word “volunteers” comes from the Latin « voluntary » i.e. « willingness ».

To prompt the « urge to have the urge to », pleasant times and a facilitated induction are great help.

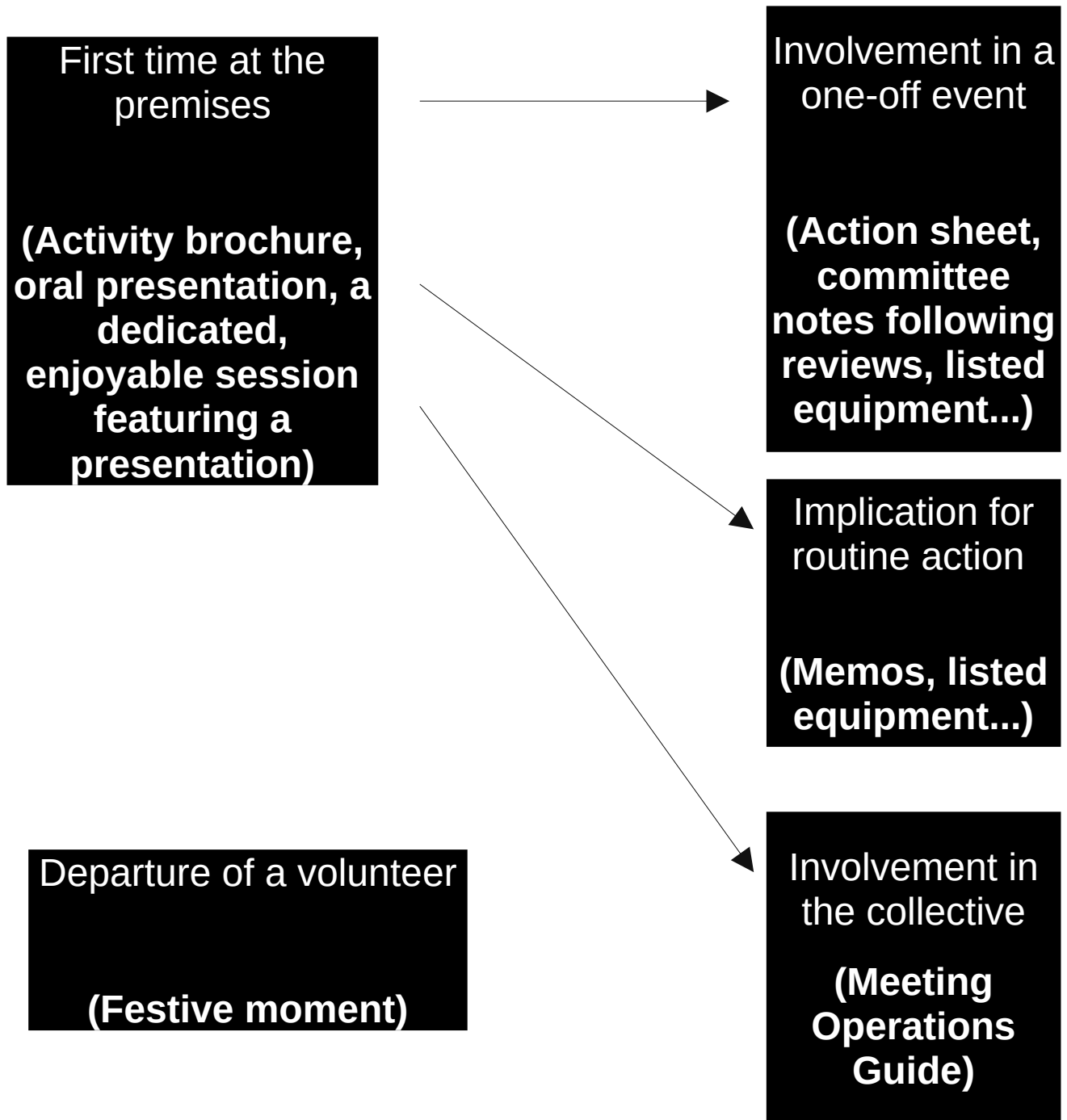
There are different steps in welcoming a member. Identifying these steps help properly welcome volunteers, maintain the collective memory and implement actions.

Breaking it down helps stepping back and see what would be needed for an ideal setting. Confronting the tools created with the new members and how they see it helps improve the induction.

Example of a drawing for a volunteer



Example of supporting documents for the volunteers



The documents require spending some time making them, yet, they ensure a vision and a way of doing things that are truly collective.

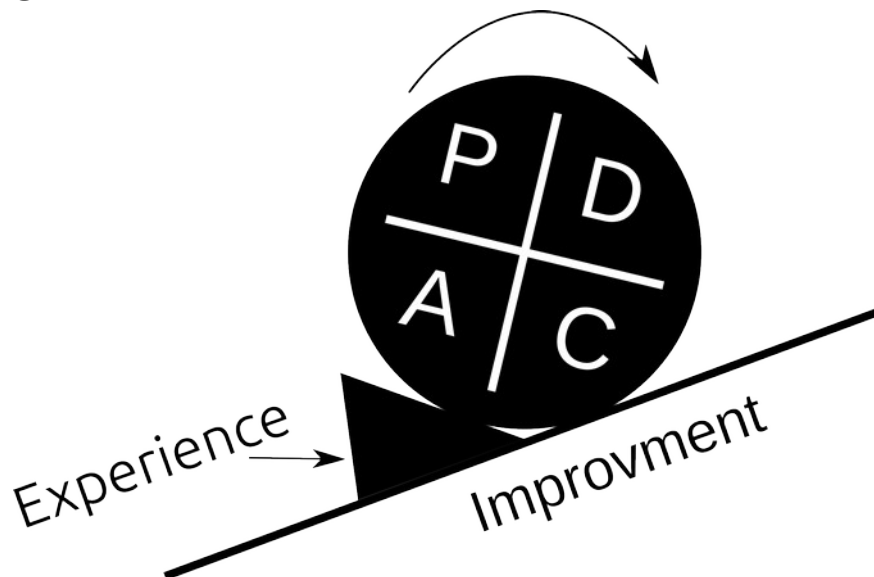
Time can also be saved on the short term. We can directly request the volunteers to get their feedbacks on the supporting documents that are provided, thus integrate them more easily whilst improving the induction for the next newcomers.

Implementation

A tool is useful only when it is used.

For example, making an assessment helps future improvement. However, if all of the improvement that is considered is not written down and taken into account at the beginning of the implementation of a new event, it will be for nothing.

Best-case scenario, someone remembers the assessment without distorting what has been remembered. In this case, the improvement is not included in the collective memory, only in the individual one.



« Deming wheel » uses the logics of improvement.

The initials are in the original English version.

- **Plan:** Plan what we will undertake
- **Do:** Develop, implement (can include a test phase)
- **Check:** Control, make an assessment
- **Act (or Adjust):** Act accordingly to improve the action

A tool is used because it will be useful afterwards!

Action sheets

The purpose of an action sheet is to be used!

We use everything that has already worked, it helps us save a lot of time the second time around!



The action sheet must be simple and easy to fill. The information must be useful (to provide current modern answers and allow them to be used again).

An action sheet contains information related to a type of event, for example a demonstration or a musical evening with bar.

Some comments on assessments can be transversal and transferred onto several sheets.

In the example of the sheet provided, several approaches have, in fact, been hidden:

- The Deming wheel;
- The 5M Method
- The time circles
- The checklist.

These various methods can be very useful, and in this template, they are neither seen or known, yet still present ;)

Efficient and lazy

Be lazy, efficient and united!

The less time we spend prepare, the more we spend doing something!



Templates

It's rather cool to have a template approved by the collective, with a fine and aesthetically pleasant layout!

But to each their own. Someone will have a knack for graphic design, someone else for layout...Well, you have to try the document out and check for any bugs as you are writing it...

In short, do create templates! (Even for response emails!)

But watch out, when we speak of templates, we don't mean .doc or .odt template files, but rather template documents. The template document (.odt under Libre Office for example) saves and exports a new document in case of modification. The original template is, thus, not altered. But obviously, we can modify it to create an improved version.

The existing templates must be listed with a link to the more recent template (A drop-off on the net is better adapted to ensure access for everyone anywhere).

Freedom!

We are not all proficient in everything... Thankfully, there are many free resources (music, icons, images...) and even reproducible projects.

We are quite pleased to find all these shared resources, but it's even better to share yourself!

Thus, our messages have a bigger impact and we are helping people with common purposes for the implementation of their actions!

Private propriety is fitted to capital and domination; free licences are for the activists and for sharing...

Start this debate inside your structures!

Practical guides



Members come and go. They are present or not present on such and such day... Having short guides, restricted to each activity rather than being global, ensure the sustainability of actions.

They must be short and easily understandable.

Letting the new members make do with the information given in the guides is a way to see if they are understandable. New members can, thus, propose some paths for improvement, if the information is not clear for everyone and anyone.

A written and available supporting document helps not confine yourself into a role where you are the only one to master the ropes.

Several possible formats

Everyday actions (accounting entries, cleaning-up to be done, cooking to be prepared...) can be specified on a simple sheet, on display panels, in memos or yet again in a Kanban. In short, wherever they will be visible and read!

The structure functioning can be written down on a light short guide to make it more pleasant to read. It will be handed to people who want to contribute the structure functioning. For example, they will find the operational drawing presentation, the decision methods, the decisions previously taken and passed or resource links.

If necessary, we can also prepare educational briefcases, bags or pouches with a checklist or any other supporting material fitted for the activity and its reappropriation.

Yet again, a small drawing (or a chart), to think of the most fitted supporting material, will help step back and see what needs to be added.

Methodology

There are many tools. And we always tend to use the same ones.



Yet, there are a lot of meeting typologies: presentation, implementation, creation, organisation, meeting, hosting, analysis, improvement, conflict management...

Using the same tool for everything is like cooking with a hammer, it's not well suited.

Besides, changing tools is good for your brain, to avoid any callus! We will also see how much the result you obtain is fuelled by the way you do it. Changes open new perspectives!

Moreover, the way we use the tools helps escalate the voice of everyone and tamper some ways (dominant speech, descending format...)

Finally, tools can be very intuitive and fun.

Bringing new life at a meeting can also help « lighten » meetings with heavy topics sometimes...

Asking various people to prepare the meetings, providing them supporting material including resources that can be used, greatly helps the quality of the demonstration, the induction and involvement of the members.

Software

As for software, there are resources such as FRAMALIBRE to guide us.

FRAMALIBRE depends on FRAMASOFT which proposes several free solutions that can be set up on your own servers.

My « advice » would be:

- To minimise the number of software, but not put all your eggs in the same basket;
- To use simple tools that several people can master (even everyone);
- To use free software to ensure that data is kept under open formats;
- To use software allowing to migrate content, if necessary, without too much trouble...

Having your own server (dedicated or shared) and your own domain name will greatly secure you more possibilities:

- Such as emails addresses outside of GAFAM;
- Your own storage and management tools;
- The implementation of back-ups of several versions of files;
- Allow private and secure conversations within the collective...

Personally (but each to their own...), I'm using NEXTCLOUD storage (shared with its storage, its calendar and the notes), a [Kanban](#), back-ups with CRON automated task, Gandi hosting with email management by [Thunderbird](#), [SPIP](#) for the websites and production storage on [Wikimedia](#).

Unfortunately, this shared hosting does not allow me to set up MATTERMOST.

