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Seeding Activism at Your Festival

Vision.

Thousands of people will go to a Peace March or music-with-a-cause, get excited to make a difference, but never connect with their neighbors with the same interests to get started. They rally, listen to music and speakers, get excited to help, & then face twenty impersonal organizations all begging, all telling them to put their name on an email list to get an invitation to a meeting sometime in the future.

It's too easy to feel anonymous and unable to make a contribution, too easy to be burned-out. People most often transform in community, not by joining large groups where they are instructed by experts.

We'll create a place for people to get started, making the connections to start neighborhood action or discussion groups. We don't push any particular ideology: rather, our goal is to help people make the connections that will work for them. This is different from almost all other organizations, which are recruiting primarily for themselves.

Many of the ideas for this project come from Volunteer & Activist Seedlings:

<http://www.boutell.com/~cataldo/sfseedlings/>

Practice.

We'll build a system similar to the carpool system, but rather than connecting just riders, it will connect people based on where they live, the issues that interest them, and their approach to becoming more active. For example, *biodiesel* enthusiasts who want to *build it* near *Walnut Creek* would find each other; people concerned about *greenhouse warming* who want to *learn more or start a book club* in *San Francisco*.

People can be encouraged, before, during or after the event, to search for neighbors with similar interests. When they find each other, they may decide to carpool together, camp together, or just meet at Your Festival or at a cafe afterwards.

For example.

Imagine a group of neighbors in Marin all interested in biodiesel, and a biodiesel exhibitor. The old approach is to have each of those neighbors approach the experts at the biodiesel table on their own, spend 30 seconds, sign up and leave. Our vision is that the neighbors will find each other before the event, meet up, go to the biodiesel table together intending to learn enough to take action, spend 20 minutes as a group, and leave with a plan for next steps. Others will start action groups, others book clubs, and on and on.

If the Biodiesel Exhibitor wants to recruit more heavily, they simply tell their members to go to Your Festival and use the system to recruit. It gives their armchair activists a chance to tackle a small but crucial leadership role, maybe their first leadership role.

We'll help transform your event further from preaching & partying with the converted, to helping festival-goers empower themselves and their community and start on a path to accomplishing their earth-protecting activism.

Cooperation & Mutual Benefits.

We'll create a collective project with your other activist sponsors, exhibitors and speakers. We'll be integrating their work into the system as they emphasize our projects, and as all of us encourage people to attend Your Festival.

For example: Imagine a biodiesel exhibitor, and assume 100 attendees interested in biodiesel are coming to Your Festival but not yet active.

- ❖ Last year, they'd all come to the table as individuals, have an animated two minute conversation, then leave with a flyer. By Monday morning, only a few are going to remember the conversation.
- ❖ This year, we'd invite the exhibitor to work with us ahead of time, and then put biodiesel in the networking system in a prominent way. Many of those 100 interested attendees will sign up, and connect with a couple neighbors with similar interests, perhaps come to the festival together, perhaps camp together. We can also send each person who clicks **biodiesel** an introduction from the exhibitor or speaker.
- ❖ In exchange for prominent placement on the networking system, the biodiesel organization sends out a mass email to their membership, encouraging their members to travel green to Your Festival, mentioning both Your Festival and SpaceShare. They encourage their members to sign up, recruit neighbors, and attend Your Festival. **It's in the Biodiesel organization's interest to get people to come to Your Festival, because now their members can use our system to recruit from among your attendees.**

Let me know what you think & what changes we'd need to make. Thanks!

*Replacing Cars with Community,
Stephen*