



2 - IMPROVE YOUR WEEKLY WORSHIP EVENT

WHAT?

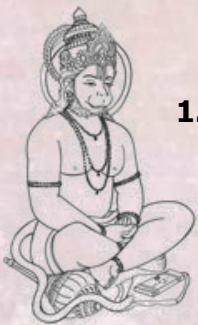
- Improve the weekly worship event that your chapter does (e.g. Hanuman Chalisa, Aarti etc).
- It's the little things that really make the difference!

WHY?

- Members will keep coming back to this event when they feel comfortable in that environment and when it's well run.
- This will naturally attract more and more people to your spiritual event, sky-rocketing your numbers. Simple!

HOW?

- Now this is the real crux of it. Here are some useful tips from people who have been to every single chapter across the country, know their problems and know what works:



1. **Advertise!** (and don't be afraid to spend money on it!)

It's shocking the amount of chapters that simply send a Facebook message out and then expect anything more than 5 people to turn up. Facebook is great for creating awareness, but it simply will not get people to your event. Use flyers, posters, videos, pictures, word of mouth and, most importantly, your personality!

Simply nothing can replace good old-fashioned face-to-face selling. Words written on paper or on screen will never be able to replicate the tone, passion and visual selling that comes from selling in person.

2. **Target Friends Groups**

When selling your event, don't just target individuals, target friends groups. The influence of friends is the most underrated thing at uni. If you ask most first or second years if they will come to your event, they'll ask you or wonder something along the lines of "*Are [Best Friend #1] and [Best Friend #2] coming? If they're coming then I'll probably come, too.*" I know I did this in first year!

3. Provide the Words

One of the big things that put many members off coming is the scary thought of "I won't know the words and will look stupid in front of everyone." The solution is simple... provide the words! Either as a print-out or on screen karaoke-style (both via the ground-breaking Sangeet of the Soul DVD given to your chapter last year for this very purpose). Words for the entire Aarti process can be found on that DVD.

Be sure to also put on the advertising itself that you'll provide the words at the event. There's not much point providing the words if you don't tell the people first!

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भूर्भुवः	bhūr bhuvassvah
तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं	tat savitur var enyām
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि	bhargoh devasya dhimahi
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्	dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt

4. Create a Comfortable Atmosphere

Once you've gotten people there once, you want them coming back every week. To do this, they need to feel comfortable in that environment and go away thinking "That was pretty cool. I enjoyed the event and didn't feel alienated, scared or out of place," rather than "Man I felt SOOOO awkward. I ain't going back there again!"

There are a number of ways you can do this.

- A)** Crack a few light jokes. This instantly lightens and sets the mood.
- B)** (Almost) Patronise. Ok, let me rephrase...explain slowly and clearly what you're going to do and how to do it before you do it (e.g. what to do during "Kapura Gauram" etc).
- C)** Put everyone in the same boat by saying something along the lines of "Don't worry if you don't know what to do, we'll explain it and we're all here to help."
- D)** Try and talk to every single person who attends before the actual event starts. This instantly will make them feel MUCH more comfortable. Trust me!
- E)** Make it fun by bringing in people who can play instruments like tabla, harmonium, manjira, even guitar. Maybe even bring in a local musical group!

5. Have Consistency

Having your event at the same time, in the same place, on the day every week will make it easy for people to remember where and when it is, even if they don't get that week's email/facebook message. Plus, it means you can produce flyers and posters en-masse (i.e. for the whole year) instead of just a few.



6. Explain The Reason

So you've got people doing the aarti, but then they won't exactly feel the passion if they don't know why they're doing it. It's just simply not enough to do something. So before every little thing you do, explain the reason for doing it. For example, before doing aarti, explain that it's a form of Bhakti Yoga (devotion that brings us closer to the Ultimate Reality) and that it relaxes the mind, uplifts us spiritually and is one of the only times we actually take time to think about something other than ourselves (i.e. Brahmaan/Ultimate Reality/'God').

For actual explanations on why we do things, you can refer to the NHSF (UK) Learning Team's document made specifically for chapters called 'The Dharma Initiative Pack' which can be found by using your chapter's login details on the NHSF website (contact Raj.Chevli@nhsf.org.uk if you don't know them) and looking in the 'Committee Resources' link on the left and then in the 'Learning' section.

The two books below are great for explaining things. Just go to the Hindu Sahitya Kendra website (www.hskonline.co.uk) and search for these:

'**Why Do We**' and '**Explaining Hindu**' and click on the first link for both.

You can also use this link on the NHSF website:

http://nhsf.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=267&Itemid=240

WHO?

- The Chapter Committee, especially the Learning/Education/Religious Co-ordinator, can lead the implementation of these small things. Remember, a quality event will bring quantity in numbers attending!
- Ultimately, both the society and the members will benefit. A win-win situation!

WHEN?

- For every worship event done throughout the year, but ESPECIALLY for the first one! Simply due to first impressions.

WHERE?

- In a decent-sized room, not too big or too small.
- Somewhere easily accessible for students in the evenings (or whenever you hold the event).