

In-House, Local and Special-Interest SAS[®] Users Groups Best Practices From Your Peers

This document is to be used as a resource for helping to sustain and grow your registered local or in-house SAS users group. Below are best practices from some of our experienced SAS users group leaders on what works best for them when it comes to running their group. Keep in mind that what works for some groups may not work for others. Different users have different needs, and it is important to tailor your group to the needs of the users in your area.

- The planning committee should be a dedicated core team of SAS users. This includes the leaders and contacts in major local companies with many SAS users, as well as people with good SAS technical skills and experience.
- Pick a good location with inside contact and support. The meeting site should be close to many SAS users and offer free parking. If possible, have the monthly meeting at a consistent, convenient time that would not interfere with work schedules.
- Treat your speakers well. Always make a certificate of appreciation and, if possible, give the speaker(s) a small gift as a token of appreciation.
- Maintain contact with potential speakers, including local and outside speakers.
- Provide mentoring and support to potential speakers and group leaders.
- Utilize the SAS users group support staff, which can assist you with mentors, giveaways, books, speakers and posting the meeting details on the users group Web site.
- Keep track of new SAS products and releases, and arrange related presentations around these when possible.
- Organize local SAS training classes to raise funds for group activities.
- Keep organizational issues to a minimum. Avoid meetings solely for the election of officials.
- Hold a one-day conference once every one to three years. This helps attract new members.
- To raise money, either collect membership dues or turn to sponsors for fundraising.
- Create a site or portal (Sharepoint, Web site, Google docs) where you can post important information and documents and gather attendee feedback for your leaders.
- Develop close, collaborative working relationships with the regional users groups in order to gather information on the types of programs in place to support the local users group LUGs in their area.
- For local groups, always ask your SAS users group contact to post your meeting on their Web site.
- Poll your attendees on an annual basis to gather feedback of what works best for them and what doesn't, as well as topics they would like to address at upcoming meetings.
- If you decide to work with a third party, make sure you have a legal contract in place outlining the agreements both parties decide upon, including service and payment guidelines if necessary. Make sure to sign, date and file.