



# OPERATION CHANGE OUT MILITARY CHALLENGE

## Event Planning Tips

Your planning team may want to consider these helpful tips when organizing a promotional event.

### 1. Define your event, its goals and your audience

- What kind of event do you want to host?
  - Will your event be a kick-off, an event to announce results, or something in between?
  - Will your event be large or small?
  - Will your event be part of an existing or larger effort on other themes, such as a traditional summer picnic, or will your event be a new, stand-alone effort specifically to promote your *OPERATION CHANGE OUT* effort?
  - Will you include informational booths, entertainment, or activities for children?
  - Will your event be inside or outdoors?
- Will the target audience be adults, children, or families? How many attendees do you expect?
- If you host a school event, who will be included?
  - Will students participate? In what way?
  - How will parents and the community at large be included?
  - Parents and community stakeholders have a vested interest in improvements to schools and municipal buildings and are likely to want to participate in the event.
- Where will the event be held?
  - Consider venues with ENERGY STAR products so the audience can learn about energy-efficient products and methods.
- Create your event plan, being sure to incorporate your goal and campaign message into all aspects of the event agenda. For example, if one of your goals is to obtain strong presence with local media, make sure the event activities are newsworthy. Larger events or ones with unusual features may attract more media attention.

### 2. Plan the speakers for the event program

- Who will participate in the event and how will they contribute?
  - Consider the event as a whole story where each speaker and activity is a chapter. Keep in mind how each presentation topic contributes to the overall message.
- Who is attending on behalf of your base leadership? If your privatized housing provider is actively participating in the change-out effort, who is attending on their behalf? Will there be formal invitations?
- Who else will be part of the event program? You may want to consider inviting:
  - Regional/local government officials (e.g., mayor, county commissioners, city council, or school board members).
  - State officials (e.g., governor, lieutenant governor, state senators or representatives, state energy commissioners, or officials).
  - Federal officials (U.S. senators or house representatives).
  - Your local utility or industry leaders.
  - Organizations that helped you become more energy efficient.
- Remember that influential guests are likely to help you secure media coverage and overall interest in your event, especially if they firmly commit to attending in advance.
- Although you may choose to do an all-day or part-day event or fair, a 30–45 minute official program is suggested to call attention to and feature your *OPERATION CHANGE OUT* plans.

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### 3. Develop your media plan

- What publicity efforts should you consider for the type of event you are creating?
  - Media spaces like newsletters, online bulletin boards, and local papers are good ways to communicate with the local community about event details.
  - Invite local media to your event by sending a news release followed with a phone call.
- Which members of the press should you call? What should you tell them about the event?
  - It is important that the press knows how the agenda is relevant to their readers and that they are given correct information on the purpose, date, time, and location of the event.
- It is often valuable to arrange for a non-press photographer to attend to help capture the event for stories, documentation, or to help in planning future promotions.
- Encourage the local radio station to broadcast on-site to share your energy-efficiency message with the community.

### 4. Plan the details

- Remember that event details will influence your event's attendance.
- If outside, will tents be needed for your event? What is the bad weather plan?
- If speakers are present, a podium will be needed so the audience can see and hear.
- Will food or beverages be provided? If so, what are the logistics and requirements?
- Will electricity be needed? If so, is there electrical service available?
- Are convenient restroom facilities available?
- Will you use posters or ads, or rely on word-of-mouth to generate interest?
- Consider using interactive teaching tools to educate your audience about ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs. For example:
  - Use a model home with ENERGY STAR lighting and appliances to demonstrate the opportunities to save.
  - A simple bathroom light bar without a cover can help you display different types of ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs.
  - A floor lamp with multiple sockets can help you display and compare various light bulbs, such as the ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs that are available in different hues of white light.
  - A lamp that has a safe cover and two sockets can show how ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs use 75% less heat than incandescent bulbs - you can really feel the difference!
- Distribute ENERGY STAR materials, such as consumer brochures, tips for saving money and energy, activity books for children, magnets, stickers, and posters.
- Invite younger students to help motivate others by decorating community buildings with energy-efficiency and environmental-related pictures or posters that they create.
- Distribute energy-efficiency tips and hand out ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent light bulbs.

### 5. Finalize your team

- Your team will need to schedule event planning meetings and decide who will be responsible for leading the overall effort, as well as assigning specific tasks, such as:
  - Coordinate the program, speakers, and program agenda
  - Create event materials, such as news releases, blurbs and talking points
  - Plan and execute logistics
  - Coordinate volunteers
  - Serve as the media contact
  - Obtain financial support, if needed
  - Document your activities

### 6. Get ENERGY STAR on your team

- Take a look inside the *OPERATION CHANGE OUT* Toolkit for other helpful materials.
- For assistance with ENERGY STAR events, please contact campaign staff at [OperationChangeOut@drintl.com](mailto:OperationChangeOut@drintl.com) - we're here to help!