

EdCamp

Beginner's Guide



*"A free unstructured conference where K-12 educators create the agenda and 'move with their feet' to explore their interests. AKA: the most awesome thing ever."
@Edutopia*

Penny Christensen

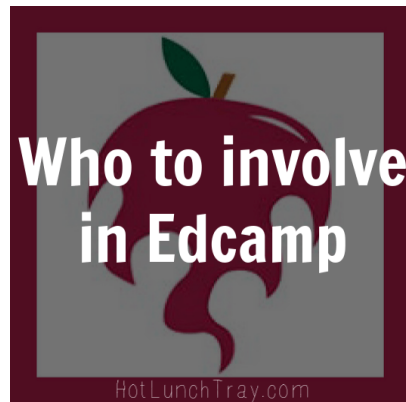
Beginner's Guide

My Start with EdCamp

I fell in love with the idea of EdCamps the moment I first participated in one. I made an effort to find one at the right time of year and did not mind traveling; I went to Savannah, GA [@EdCampSav](#). I then identified my expectations and quickly followed-up with one closer to home in Atlanta, [@EdCamp ATL](#). Once I hosted one, I have forever identified a source of both high anxiety and high satisfaction. But I am addicted to the high of offering fellow professional educators both time and space to reflect on their practice in a safe, collaborative setting.

Psst, I do not count the in-district option as we did not control who actually was able to come to that one. And I know that EdCamp isn't for everybody in the same way that no single Professional Learning can be for everyone. But I do believe most people should try it to evaluate that for themselves.





Who to Involve in EdCamp

So, who is a likely participant/volunteer/evangelist for EdCamp? Plenty of people you work with right now. Those with influence, but not a title. Those with drive, but without direction. Those who believe in the power of a single teacher. The motivation for participating in an EdCamp often comes from the power of a personal invitation.

The belief that one can work outside a school system and come up with the resources to put on a successful EdCamp may be harder to find. The team you pull together to put on an EdCamp has to thrive on their belief that an EdCamp can bring opportunity and change to participants. They have to be people easy to work with and flexible in remembering this is a volunteer job. They need to always treat everyone in a kind manner, without return volunteers you never grow your event!

Establish your Network

This isn't time for a cold read. Start with those you know! Who have you successfully worked with in the past? Involve as many different types of educators as you can: different levels (Assistant Principals, Coaches, Special Education teachers) geographic, philosophic, and demographics should that your EdCamp is inclusive and welcomes all educators.

Scour existing Twitter Lists from neighboring EdCamps to find those who are local and similar-minded!

Voluntell Folks How to Help

Do not reserve help only for the day of the event. Plan out some roles which can converge the week before your event. Ask a volunteer to research and implement an advertising/PR strategy, ask someone to gather donations, ask someone to provide meal(s). You may want to have them report out to the groups every week or so, but for the most part if a teacher wants to be involved they are likely self-motivated.

If you kick off the idea you need to be willing to tell volunteers how to help.

However, as soon as anyone takes ownership of something, tell them to let you know how it turns out. Only check-in to see what they need; trust them to the finish line. The nice thing about an EdCamp is that everything is a nice extra alongside the learning. So even if something does not get done it is not such a big deal. You are better off trying to develop ownership and build capacity within your team than trying to do it all yourself!



EdCamp SWAG and Door Prizes

Yes, the real reward is the knowledge and connections you make at an EdCamp. However it is fun to get the other good stuff too, right? And when others tell the story of your EdCamp they will include the awesome prizes, and food, and t-shirt they got. Because teachers always learn from everything they do, we assume attendees learned, but look at this other good stuff they got!

Yes, there are other important things. Do not ignore the location, wifi, social media presence, or the logistics of signing people up and signing them in, but ... about that good stuff you want to give away ... and we know what the good stuff is, don't we? SWAG and Door-Prizes!

EdCamp T-shirts

Without setting up a nonprofit, you need to identify a local printer for a quote and introduce them to a sponsor you find to pay for the shirts. Sounds too easy? Of course it isn't, but here are the steps.

Estimate the number of shirts, aim high. Ascertain cost for a variety of sizes, sometimes XL+ cost more. Speaking of that, plan for a wide spectrum of sizes M-XL adult sizes.

Create an EdCamp design, consider outsourcing this to a class which is learning how to do this, short of that ask the printer who they work with at your/someone on the planning team's school. The design can be either static or a new one yearly, but you free up time if students do it, so don't worry about it being perfect. Once you have a graphic of the EdCamp, plan where to include your hashtag and sponsor/vendors. Decide if you will print your premier vendors on the back or just an inspirational quote.

Once you have a quote, start shopping the idea to potential larger sponsors: car dealerships, local resorts, realtors, an educational organization.

EdCamp Meals

You can cover a light breakfast with the funds the EdCamp in a Box provides ([link](#)), but if you want lunch you will need to start with a quote from a local restaurant which delivers to the EdCamp location. Numbers can be hard to estimate as many people sign up right before attending. The first year is the toughest to estimate, but once you have one year under your belt you can start with last year's number and estimate using the tools within EventBrite to project a final number.

Attendee Bags

While not glamorous, a bag becomes necessary if you do the rest of the job well, getting SWAG to stuff bags with, the t-shirt, and {fingers crossed} Door Prizes to put in the bags!

School Media Specialists and local Librarians may help you out with a connection to a vendor who has giveaway bags. These are like the ones you may get at conference and are likely to have a tie to literature, bonus, and be cute enough for a teacher to carry, awesome!

Those bags are valuable to potential donors too. You can offer to stuff the bags with their donated pens and post-it notes, but also literature these informal leaders at their school may be interested in. Obviously you control to whom you offer that, but it can sweeten a deal to convince a donor on the return of their investment.

Plan to give these out with check-in the day of. However, stuff everything except the t-shirt the evening before.

Potential EdCamp Sponsors

Start with your EdCamp committee for connections within their families or known educator families in the area. Consider local realtors, educational technology companies, local car dealerships, local chains/restaurants/grocery stores all as potential sponsors.

About your LinkedIn account; this is a perfect time to work those resources, those business cards you have collected and connected with from conferences past. Who is working for an educational technology company? Anyone who now has a job in the private sector? How about someone who works for a publishing house? Your contacts can connect you to those willing to donate to EdCampers if you present your request and connect with a decision maker who wants to support educators.

Always ask for donations, but if you need to accept cash, document it well, and keep receipts!!! After the event include receipts to your sponsors with their personalized Thank You note.

Raffle/Door Prizes

Teacher Subscriptions

Many educational technology companies are more than happy to donate a one-year, premium subscription to a teacher. It does not cost them much and may bring in future revenue. Start with any salespeople you or contacts in your district know for companies your teachers are interested in. Ask for free premium accounts.

You may need to create some promotional pages to stand in as the “prize.” Just make sure all the information is included on it – who to contact, email, code to use, etc.

Teacher Tools

A big-ticket item right now is ergonomic furniture. Scour local EdCamps for similar giveaways and target in on those companies for donations. ergonomic furniture.

Smaller technology for the classroom, ipevo, Queball, podcasting equipment, small camera set-up.

Books

Yes. Teachers always want to read. Consider reaching out to authors you know on Twitter and asking for specific donations of books, even autographed books. They may send a variety or multiples, but if they were a teacher they usually honor these requests (because teacher = awesome).

Reach out also to the (database, book) vendors your Media Specialists/Librarians might offer up, they are often connected to professional learning publishers who could donate multiple copies of professional learning books – and they know the popular ones!

Online Courses

Reach out to the big players in online course offerings like Coursera, EdX, Canvas.net, Udemy. Also keep in mind the smaller solopreneurs/teacherpreneurs out there offering small applicable classes for teachers. Searching Pinterest, Blogs, and Twitter should help you find those one-off classes which may donate one complimentary course to your EdCamp.

Teacher Gift Certificates

Reach out to support at places like Donors Choose and TeachersPayTeachers. Start with a small request and then ask them for more the following year.

Amazon gift certificates, local teacher stores, target, are all awesome prizes for teachers! Consider suggesting these to those who want to contribute to the raffle/door prizes but do not have physical items to donate.

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Local Business Donations

Offer local small businesses the chance to contribute and show their support of these teachers too! Target the most involved in the community and offer them special ways to contribute with gift baskets, gift certificates, in-person volunteers.

It isn't enough to give stuff away.

As you are awarding the Raffle/Door Prizes, take a lot of pictures of the excitement and the prizes! Make sure to tweet these out with your EdCamp hashtag and the vendor username.

Advertise a Thank You booth, a place for teachers to get their picture taken a tweet out to the vendors how much they appreciate the support! Thank yous for the EdCamp and the recipient should be welcomed social media presence by the donor!

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Jobs at EdCamp

You may not have paid close attention attending an EdCamp to take note of all the jobs happening the day of an EdCamp, let alone guess at the jobs required to get to that day. So you are going to need a list of EdCamp jobs to start.

There is more preparation the more intricate you want your EdCamp to be. Before deciding on elements to include at your EdCamp, consider the jobs which are necessary behind the scenes to accomplish those things and if you have the personnel to create such an EdCamp.

Remember, you can always upgrade your EdCamp each year!

Pick A Job

Hopefully, all volunteers work on something of interest, that they are good at, but that is ideally. However, I doubt anyone is passionate about every job which will need to be completed the day of EdCamp; use a list and sign ups to help get all jobs done.

Pointedly ask for help setting up, during the EdCamp, and cleaning up. People may not want to impose on you by asking the organizer – so ask them first and often!

Redundancy is Key

Each job should have more than one person assigned to it. Redundancy will save the day when people fall ill, children need to go to the doctor, or someone just plain overslept. As an organizer, you need to know a little bit about each job to pitch in wherever needed.

Please use [this Google Document](#) and tailor it to your EdCamp. It has a place to add people, for them to add themselves to see where you may need more help preparing the day before or executing well the day of.



Read all [EdCamp posts on the HotLunchTray.com](#).

EdCamp Beginner's Guide

The EdCamp Beginner's Guide will help you launch your local EdCamp. Read through the major facets to get your EdCamp off the ground: Who to Involve in EdCamp, EdCamp SWAG & Door Prizes Round-up, and Jobs at an EdCamp.