



# Program Design & Planning Guide – Basics



# Discovery, Define, Design

## Overview

Among the vast array of financial literacy programs that have cropped up over the past decade, few – if any – can claim to draw upon solid empirical evidence indicating best practices for financial education. Many programs are one-dimensional, fail to align with larger objectives, and lack overall campaign strategy.

Much of these programs' failure is rooted in a lack of financial education expertise to guide initial program planning and design. Often people with no background in financial education are just appointed to start a financial literacy program. Their lack of experience often leaves them feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to find the best solution.

The campaign you and/or your organization choose to design may range from a small classroom program to a nationwide effort that serves more than a half million people. This section guides you through the developmental process, ensuring that the campaign aligns with your educational, philanthropical, and organizational objectives at every step. Developing a financial education program is a three-part process:



Discovery



Define

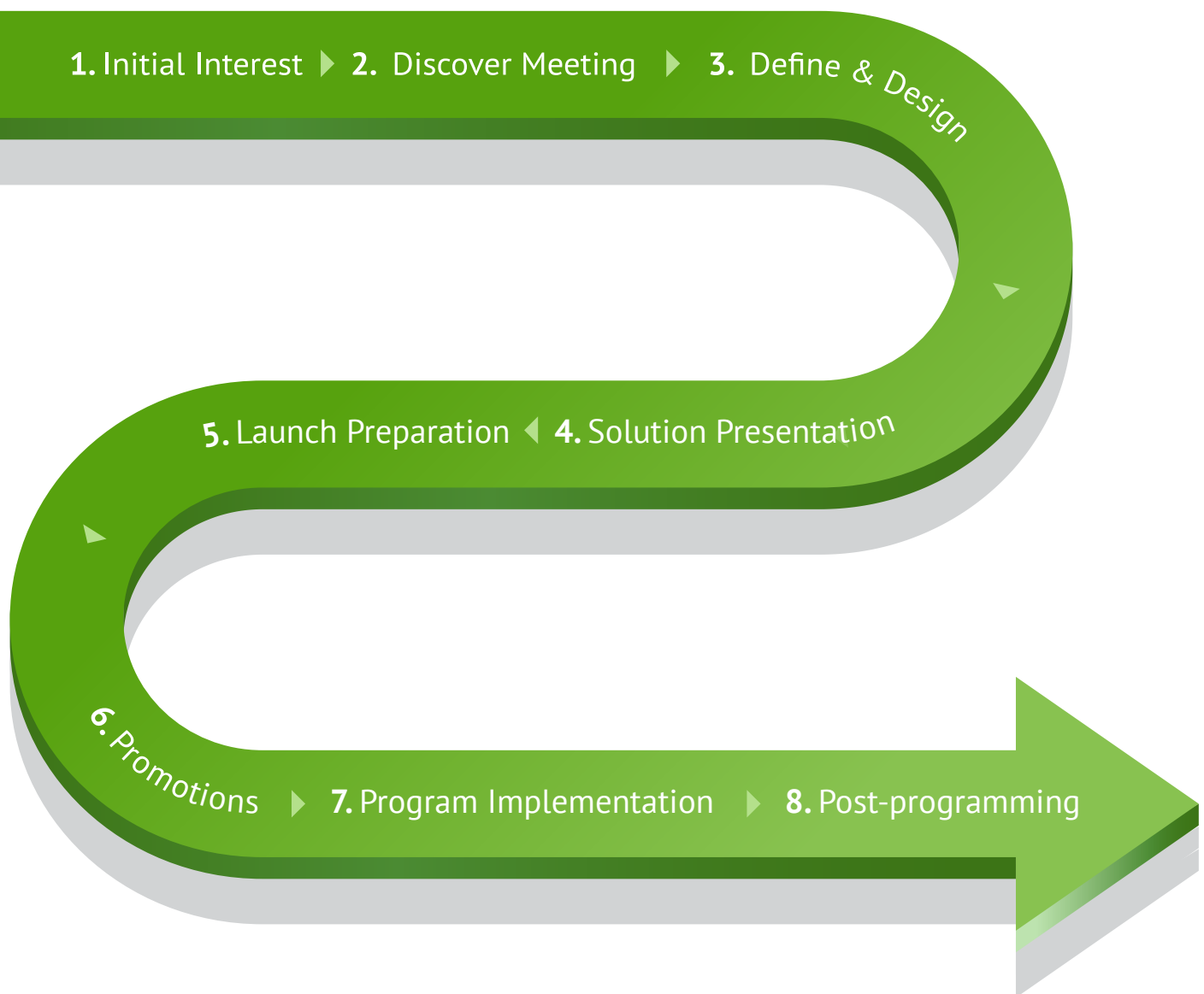


Design

# Introducing Financial Education Programming

The first step in preparing to launch a financial education program is to introduce the concept of bringing a financial wellness initiative to your organization.

The main goal of the introductory phase is to get initial buy-in and progress the program to the next stage, where you will lead a discovery meeting.



# Discovery



One-size-fits-all financial literacy programs do not work for most organizations. Each group has unique educational, organizational, and philanthropic objectives that require specialized solutions.

In this section you will find scripts, questions, and tips to help you better understand the needs of your audience and the goals of the organization you serve.

Deliver this in way that best accommodates the audience you are speaking with, your personality, and your organizational relationship. Adjust the materials based on what you know about the organization.

The discovery phase involves clarifying the organization's unique goals. This process lays the foundation for clearly defined programming objectives and custom program design. Increase your chances of success by discovering:

## *Target Audience*

Uncover the needs and desires of the target audience to be reached by the campaign via surveys & interviews.

## *Right Questions*

Ask the right questions of key stakeholders to guide overall initiative objectives.

## *Feasibility*

Assess the feasibility of your vision given your available monetary and personnel resources.

## *Grow*

Discover growth plans to ensure that the initial rollout aligns with longer-term goals.

# Define



Financial literacy programs that do not clearly define quantifiable measures of success in advance of development lack structure. Such programs often appear haphazard and pieced together, and are likely to deliver subpar results.

During the 'define' phase you will develop measures to provide the overall blueprints for your campaign and barometers of program impact. The empirical data you gather through these measurements will provide standards by which you can judge your program's success.

Create measures to provide empirical evidence of your program's impact toward achieving the organizational objectives. Such measures may include:

## 1) Educational Measures

The program you design will generate data points you can measure to help assess program impact.

### Assessments

Tests and surveys should be conducted before the program starts, at select points during implementation, and according to set timelines after the program concludes.

### Behavior Change Measures

Build in empirical measures to demonstrate participant adoption or modification of financial behaviors (i.e. savings rate, debt load, credit scores, retirement plan participation, wage garnishment measures, etc.).

## 2) Organizational Measures

Establish key barometers to empirically measure your corporate objectives. These measures are likely to vary widely from organization to organization, and may include:

### Internal Personnel Measurements

Participation in retirement plans, loan

reduction, absenteeism / productivity measures, etc.

### Revenue

Client / student acquisition, productivity increases, income earned, client acquisition cost reduction, etc.

### Brand Enhancement

Media pickups, relationship activities, community positioning, client feedback, etc.

### Meeting Regulatory

ERISA / DoL compliance, foundation & sponsorship requirements, etc.

## 3) Philanthropic Measures

Review your current philanthropic initiatives and establish measures that align with the new or expanded financial education programming you develop.

### Review

Review your current philanthropic pursuits to ensure that your new or expanded financial education program aligns with the mission of ensuring program longevity and building cross-department collaborations.

# Design



Most financial literacy programs lack the level of design expertise needed to ensure positive brand alignment and overall results. Many ‘programs’ are simply random financial literacy resources pieced together without considering flow or how each individual asset contributes to the greater initiative.

This section shows you how to design a program with purpose. All your campaign components must work together to promote financial literacy and to further your business objectives. In well-designed programs, the flow of information and built-in promotional components lead to greater overall campaign results.

Creating a successful financial education campaign requires that the first three phases build upon each other: discovery, define, and design. The impact, overall outcomes, and results of your program are directly influenced by the information gathered during the discovery and define phases and then molded into a custom solution during the design phase.





## Discovery

The discovery phase is where you learn about the needs of the organization and individuals you will be serving. This process lays the foundation for defining programming objectives and helps you design a program for maximum impact.





## Define

The define phase is the time when you develop measures to provide overall campaign blueprints and set barometers to assess program impact. The empirical data you gather through these measurements allow you to judge your program's accomplishments toward reaching organizational, educational, and philanthropic objectives.





## Design

Once you've gathered the data in the discovery phase, established measures in the define phase, and are beginning the design process, there are many important points to consider. This section will help you analyze the feedback from the discovery session and create a program that best meets the needs of the stakeholders.

First, be sure to analyze the data with the least possible amount of bias. Some people may present solutions with which they are most comfortable, rather than the best solution for the client and end user. For instance, the client may answer that they typically give training online and through email newsletters; yet the consultants recommended live training as their primary education vehicle. Carefully weigh all the information you receive to design solutions that honestly meet the organization's needs and requirements.

This section is organized according to [Question #s](#) from the Discovery section.



# Conclusion

Most financial literacy programs lack the level of design expertise needed to ensure positive brand alignment and overall results. Many 'programs' are simply random financial literacy resources pieced together without considering flow or how each individual asset contributes to the greater initiative.

Successful programs are built with purpose. All the campaign components work together to promote financial literacy and to further the organization's objectives. In well-designed programs, the flow of information and built-in promotional components lead to greater overall campaign results.

Creating a successful financial education campaign requires three phases: discovery, define, and design. The impact, overall outcomes, and results of any program take shape using the information gathered during the discovery phase. During the define phase, viable measures are developed to quantify and qualify the program's success at reaching organizational, educational, and philanthropic goals. At the design phase, you build upon the discovery and define information to mold a custom financial education solution to meet the unique needs of the organization and participants being served.