**Start early** – Best to have full slate of programs to post in January, even if there are lots of holes.

**Spend some time thinking about goals or objectives, even if very basic goals for the year**. If you can agree on these, they can serve as guideposts as you begin planning or generating ideas. Revisit these after you generate programs for the year using the “Program Machine”.

**Examples of annual goals:** *(Note: This is a good time to craft your Annual Operational Plan for Program Directors. This is CORE requirement for the chapter and we think it is a great way to force advance planning and coordination with other board directors)*

* Deliver all or some (specify) of the annual events that members expect (update to make events fresh)
* Plan at least two programs to maximize attraction (probably low cost but high attendance events)
* Plan at least two Special Events to retain members, delight members, maintain high interest in the chapter, and make some money for the chapter.
* Maximize attendance or fill each event and get superior evaluations
* Net at least $5,000, 10,000, or another specific monetary goal. Even if making money is not your primary goal, and arguably that should never be your primary goal, you will still have financial goals. Why? Because you will most likely want to use the net income from programs for the year, to pay for a portion of your ASTD assistant’s salary and costs of the annual ALC trip for Board Members.
  + *Also, consider sharing the net income generation responsibility. Work with the finance director, president, or other board members to distribute some of the net income responsibility to membership, sponsorships, or other income generating board members or vehicles.*

**Generating ideas:**

* Read or scan these next four documents to get lots of ideas before you meet as a group to brainstorm ideas and start charting to the “Member Machine”. (all are included in the “shared resources package”)
  + The Six Breakthrough Formulas Guide, Tips, and Tool Sheet ( a six page document for planning events)
  + The Four Secrets Tip Sheet: Twenty-four tips, techniques, and methods to build membership and buzz. (a four page document for planning and promotion of events)
  + Sacramento ASTD Programs in 2012 (with explanatory notes)
  + Sacramento ASTD Programs in 2013 (with explanatory notes)
    - Consider keeping or producing an annual program log like this for next year’s directors of program planning. Use past ideas to generate new ones
* Use other chapters (ask about programs in past year(s), what they are planning this year, perhaps even how you can coordinate with them to present the same speaker or topic at different times.)
* Use national conference brochures for ideas (ASTD ICE, LERN, Training Magazine Conference)
* Ask past program directors. Most will have kept an idea file. Mine it for ideas.
* Use these categories to generate ideas: speakers, topics, trends, problems or issues, panel ideas…
* Get a group together (other directors, board, past program directors)
* Use the results from your annual ASTD Chapter Survey. If you don’t do one, start one.
* NOW - Use the **“Program Machine”!** See next page

**The Program Machine (PM) can help you create a diverse set of engaging programs and events**

* **Start by generating multiple ideas in each category** (see the PM or below)
  + annual or regular monthly or special program / attraction or retention event / speakers – national, regional, or local / sponsored or not / aimed at novice, some experience, or seasoned pro / Hot topic, old chestnut, or way out there / For trainer, designer-developer, OD professional, coach, or e-learning professional / day, or evening, or special time and day / ASTD Competencies in area of expertise or foundational competencies / make money, lose money, or break-even
* **Attach months to all events** 
  + Then get specific about dates and times
* **Then pick some of the best ideas and chart them**
  + Pencil them into the program machine to see if you have variety and are meeting the expectations of all your constituencies
* **Look for a variety of coverage and variety in the categories chosen**
* **Circle back to your goals (page 1) and ask a few questions:**
  + Have you met your goals?
  + What more could be done to meet the goals?
  + Where are the issues? (lack of variety? Not meeting the needs of some constituencies? Other?)
    - What can you do to overcome the issues?