



## LEADership Book Club Procedure

### Purpose

The LEAD book club is a collaborative learning opportunity to explore leadership and personal/professional growth topics for regularly scheduled full and part-time LEAD City employees. LEAD sponsors two books a year and hosts three sessions at a restaurant from each of the three LEAD Cities. All book and topic recommendations (from employees or team members) are presented to the LEAD curriculum planning team for consideration.

### Applicability

LEAD Coordinator, LEAD Curriculum Planning Team, LEAD Executive Committee, and LEAD City employees, and restaurants.

### Instructions

#### 1. Book Selection

- Employees or team members recommend books to the LEAD Coordinator.
- The LEAD Coordinator researches the books and brings a list of choices with a synopsis of the books to a curriculum planning team meeting at least 6 months in advance of the book club (in the fall for the summer book club and in the spring for the winter book club).
- Curriculum planning team members choose one or two books or topics that they feel are most pertinent for City employees.
- One or two curriculum team members volunteer to read the book to review it.
- The curriculum members that have previewed the book give their input back to the team and present a reason to (or not to) recommend the book for the book club.
- Criteria to keep in mind:
  - The Cities have a broad audience so the book needs to be applicable to most employees.
  - Book length should not be excessive.
  - Our Cities are situated in a more formal and professional environment which should be taken into account when considering topics, language, and rating.
  - Research New York Times and other recommended leadership reading lists or novels that illustrate work-applicable topics.

#### 2. Book Purchase

- As of 7/7/20, the LEAD Coordinator purchases 21 books (7 for each LEAD City) through the Amazon account at the City of St. Charles. This book order has to be delivered to the City of St. Charles and then the LEAD Coordinator distributes 7 books to each City (in person or by mail).
- The LEAD Coordinator emails the inventory control procurement technicians at the City of St. Charles to place the order (see appendix A).
- The LEAD Coordinator orders books to be mailed to the appropriate City's HR department or delivers the books to each City if they are ordered through the City of St. Charles' inventory control department.

- Another option moving forward is for each City to order and pay for their own 7 books so that they can receive them directly.

### **3. Date and Location**

- The LEAD Coordinator chooses some potential dates for the LEADership book club (usually Tuesday-Friday) at each separate City and emails the Executive Committee member from each City to determine a preferred date (or dates to avoid) for their City's book club.
- The LEAD Coordinator chooses a restaurant in each City at which to host the book club.
  - The ideal restaurant environment has a private area or at least a less crowded area where a discussion can be facilitated and the music is not too loud.
  - The Coordinator contacts the restaurant and reserves a date and makes an initial reservation for 8-10 people. Maximum number at a table for discussion is 8. If more than 8 people sign up, divide them into separate tables.
  - The Coordinator informs the restaurant representative that the final book club number will be provided the day before the book club.
  - Restaurants that have been used – St. Charles (Colonial East and West, Brunch Café); Batavia (Briana's Pancake House); Elgin (Alexander's Café).

### **4. Advertising**

- Create an Eventbrite registration page for each of the three book club dates.
- Create an email announcement in Outlook with the book title, author, and book theme and includes the Eventbrite registration links in the email for employees to sign up.
- Create a flyer in PDF format and attaches it to the Outlook email invitation or links to it on the LEAD website.
- Post the book club information on the LEAD website, embedding the Eventbrite links for signing up.
- Send the Outlook email invitation to all three Executive Committee members, and they forward the email (taking the "FW" out of the subject line) to all of their City employees.
- LEAD Executive Committee members (or their designees) post the book club flyer in common employee areas and/or send to departments to post.
- If the LEAD city has a newsletter, LEAD Executive Committee members (or their designees) post the book club advertisement in the newsletter.
- LEAD Curriculum Planning Team and Executive Committee members advertise the book club personally at employee meetings and through word of mouth.

### **5. Book Sign-Out**

- Each City's HR department has a lending library from which employees check out the LEAD books. Books may be checked out for two weeks; if there's not a waiting list, employees may keep books longer.
- Each City creates their own sign out sheet and designates someone to oversee the LEAD book club check out so that anyone on the waiting list receives a book in a timely fashion.
- Following the book club, two copies of the LEAD book are maintained in each City's lending library.
- Extra LEAD books are brought to the speaker events and available for employees from each of the three Cities to take for free.

## **6. Book Club Discussion Questions**

- The LEAD Coordinator creates a “Food for Thought” discussion question guide to send to book club participants a week in advance of the book club.
  - The Coordinator may develop questions for the municipal audience while reading the book.
  - There are typically book club discussion questions available online from the publisher or from other online book clubs (see Appendix B).

## **7. Book Club Communication**

- Upon registering for the book club, participants will receive a registration confirmation from Eventbrite with the option to include the book club date on their Outlook or other calendar.
- Automatic reminders are set-up on Eventbrite that will be sent out one week and then two days in advance of the book club.
- If a new employee signs up for the book club, the LEAD Coordinator may send a welcome email giving some additional details for the book club (see Appendix C).

## **8. Book Club Facilitation**

- The LEAD Coordinator seeks facilitators from among the book club attendees to provide an opportunity for leadership development among LEAD city employees. (The facilitator should have attended at least one book club.)
- The LEAD Coordinator sends the facilitator some guidelines in advance of the book club (see Appendix D).
- If a participant facilitator is not available, the LEAD Coordinator may facilitate or ask a member of the Curriculum Planning Team or Executive Committee to facilitate the discussion.

## **9. Coordinator Responsibilities at the Book Club:**

- Provide the final number to the restaurant at least one day in advance.
- Attend each book club in order to arrive 20 minutes early to ensure that tables are set up in a good configuration.
- Create and bring a sign-up sheet, pens, name badges, and a sharpie pen to each session.
- Inform the restaurant staff that all attendees will be on one bill. (Keep an eye out for coupons from the restaurant.)
- Welcome all participants at each of the tables, especially encouraging any new participants for coming.
- Ensure that table discussions are focused on the book club topic and don't become focused on just one City's issues (especially if everyone at that table is from one City.)
- Ensure that the book club wraps up early enough for employees to leave on time and announces any other upcoming LEAD events to book club participants.
- Ideally, pay the bill with one of the LEAD City's credit cards if available. However, if that's not possible, the Coordinator pays with his/her own credit card and turns in the receipt for reimbursement.

**10. Book Club Follow-up for the LEAD Coordinator:**

- Submit the restaurant bill(s) for reimbursement if needed.
- Send a list of each City's attendees to the Executive Team member from each City.
- Report back to the Curriculum Planning Team the total number of participants at the next team meeting.
- Record the number of participants from each City on the LEAD Budget Percentage Worksheet.
- Delete the book club advertisement from the LEAD website.
- Ensure that the event is no longer active on Eventbrite.
- Email a thank you note to the book club facilitators and copy the Executive Committee member from their City (see Appendix E).

**11. Book Club Follow-up for the LEAD Cities:**

- Ensure that books have been returned to the HR lending libraries from those on the check-out list.

## Appendix A

### Ordering LEADership Books through City of St. Charles Inventory Control

To: Purchasinggroup@stcharlesil.gov  
Cc: Alpa Patel (apatel@stcharlesil.gov)  
Subject: LEAD book club order

Good morning:

I need to order 21 books from Amazon for the LEAD book club.

**List name of the book, author, and provide Amazon link.**

The LEAD budget codes are as follows. LEAD billing is based upon a percentage from each City. Please contact Alpa Patel (*as of 7/10/20*) in Finance if you have any questions about this arrangement.

ACCT UNIT	ACCT #	ACTIVITY	ACCT CATG	DIST COST %(LY)	
920211	52319	29001	BOOK	41.67%	ELGIN
920211	52319	29002	BOOK	18.25%	BATAVIA
920211	52319	29003	BOOK	40.08%	ST CHARLES

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

## Appendix B

### Sample of “Food for Thought” LEADership Book Club Discussion Questions

(Posted on LEAD website and linked to Eventbrite pre-set reminders)



#### LEADership Book Club

*Digital Minimalism – Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World*, by Cal Newport

#### Food for Thought Discussion Questions

1. Did you enjoy the book or TED talk & articles? Why or why not?
2. Do you feel the book or other material enhanced your knowledge and understanding of the impact of social media upon individuals and the culture?
3. What was one point the author made that caught your attention?
4. Cal Newport says, “I’ve become convinced that what you need is a full-fledged philosophy of technology use, rooted in your deep values, that provides clear answers to the questions of what tools you should use and how you should use them, and equally important enables you to confidently ignore everything else.” (Pg. XIV) How do you feel about this philosophy of digital minimalism?
5. What do you think about attempting the digital declutter (also referred to as a jarring re-set) which suggests that a person step away from optional online activities for thirty days while filling that time with other meaningful choices and then becoming intentional about adding back any online activities?
6. Cal offered some time-honored practices that he feels are lacking in the digital age, like spending time alone and reclaiming leisure. Which of these ideas seem most pertinent to you right now?
7. The author raises a battle cry to “join the attention resistance,” stating that anyone that chooses to be more discerning about their use of social media is taking a stand against the social engineering and cultural expectations so prevalent in our culture. He asserts that anyone that does not use social media most of the time, as is the norm, will be perceived as weird. Where do you see yourself in relation to the attention resistance movement?
8. What’s one idea you’ve already incorporated or choose to incorporate as a result of reading about this topic?
9. Would you recommend this book to other readers or to your close friends? Why or why not?

*Digital minimalism definitively does not reject the innovations of the internet age, but instead rejects the way so many people currently engage with these tools. We are required to take control of our own digital lives – to confidently decide for ourselves what tools we want to use, for what reasons, and under what conditions. This isn’t reactionary; it’s common sense. (Pg. 253)*

## Appendix C

### Email for First Time Participants

Hello Name:

We are so glad you are interested in attending the LEAD book club.

For all LEAD events, employees simply check with supervisors to make sure that work schedules allow for participation and then sign up online. (Employees are welcome to go to any of the dates that work best for them and don't have to attend in the city in which they work.)

- Please sign up [here \(link to the LEAD website\)](#) for the date and location you wish to attend.
- You simply read the book (check out from HR or a library) **or** in this case you may watch the TED talk and read a couple of articles listed on the [LEAD website](#).
- I will send attendees a list of suggested discussion questions about a week in advance (you do not need to write out answers; they are just questions to get you thinking about the material).
- The book club will be facilitated by an employee that has attended in the past.
- You are welcome to share as much or as little as you like during the discussion.
- You do not need to bring anything with you. (Occasionally someone brings their book or the discussion questions if they want to refer to them, but most people just show up.)
- You may order anything you wish from the menu at the restaurant, and the breakfast is complimentary.
- I will inform your LEAD city that you participated.

At this time, the following employees are signed up for the November 1 St. Charles location, and I will be there as well:

**List name and City**

Please let me know if you need any other information, and I'm really looking forward to seeing you there.

## Appendix D

### Email to Facilitate the LEADership Book Club

(At least a week in advance, send an email to one participant from each book club location. If no one is available, the LEAD Coordinator may lead the discussion or email a Curriculum Planning Team or Executive Committee member in advance of the book club.)

Hello:

I'm wondering if you'd like to facilitate the LEADership book club discussion at one of the tables on **DATE, TIME, and RESTAURANT** ([link directions if needed](#)). We have \_\_\_\_ number of people registered, so I'm planning on breaking up into two groups. ([You can provide the list of participants if you wish.](#))

There is no pressure to accept this invitation - some people enjoy facilitating and others do not.

Basically, your role is to guide the conversation and invite people to share their views. You may want to direct the conversation to those that don't readily jump in (without making them feel obligated) and gently steer it away from those that might want to share a lot. (You've been to the book club, so you get the gist.)

Here are the [food for thought questions](#) that I sent out to all participants that you can use to start the discussion. You don't have to cover all of the questions; it's just a tool.

Please let me know if you have any questions and if you'd like to facilitate a table.

Thank you!



## Appendix E

### Thank you to Book Club Participant Facilitator

To: **Facilitator Name**

Cc: **Executive Team member from facilitator's City**

Subject: Thank you for your Leadership

Hello **NAME**:

On behalf of the LEAD planning teams, I'd like to thank you for your investment of time and your willingness to facilitate one of the tables for the LEAD book club in **CITY ATTENDED** today. I was grateful that you so readily agreed to help out in this leadership role! Thank you very much.

Jennifer Kuhn  
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for the Cities of Batavia, Elgin, and St. Charles  
c: 630-762-7090  
[www.strongercommunity.net](http://www.strongercommunity.net)

LEAD: Developing leaders through collaborative learning to build a stronger community.