



Event Administration Handbook for RLUGs

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. What is an event?	3
a. As defined by LEGO	3
i. AFOL Exhibition	3
ii. AFOL Display	3
iii. AFOL Convention	3
b. As defined by your group.....	3
c. Types of events	3
3. Event Life-Cycle	4
a. Event Initiation.....	4
b. Event Planning	5
c. Event Execution.....	5
d. Event Closure	5
Document Charter	6
DESCRIPTION.....	6
WORK GROUP LEADER(S):	6
Version information	6

1. Introduction

a. Whether you've formed an official RLUG or not, this document will help guide you in your efforts to lead and/or participate in events to showcase the LEGO hobby. There are many draws to events, and some are not for everyone, but this document will assist as you explore the reasons why, how, and where you will seek and create events. A lot of the decisions you'll be faced with in this document will support your mission and vision of an organized group. If you haven't taken the steps yet to make those group decisions, getting the experience through events will help lead you to those formative steps.

2. What is an event?

a. As defined by LEGO

To add structure around how LEGO can help support the RLUG community, LEGO has added clarity to what constitutes an event. The following definitions were retrieved from this link:

https://lan.lego.com/static/build/docs/LEGO_Ambassador_Network_-_APPLICATION_-_Recognized_LEGO_User_Group.pdf

i. AFOL Exhibition

An event where the public audience can interact with AFOLs while browsing the MOC exhibition and various activities driven by the event responsible LUG. The event is temporary and most often set to last a couple of days with a public exhibition, after-hours workshops and social interaction for the AFOLs

ii. AFOL Display

A showcase, where a display, built by the LUG, is shown to the public with no interaction between the AFOLs and a public audience. It is most often a model displayed in a window or behind a fence with the public passing by.

iii. AFOL Convention

A formal assembly of AFOLs and TFOLs that spans across multiple days to allow discussion about, and action on, promoting the LEGO® hobby. In addition to offering various activities to registered attendees (such as presentations, workshops, and seminars) time is allocated to promote the LEGO® hobby to a public audience. An AFOL Convention is expected to host a minimum of one full day for the registered attendees and one full day for the public audience.

b. As defined by your group

Believe it or not, you can have your own definition of what an event is. If you think it's in the best interest of the public, the culture, your RLUG, or the members of your group, by all means, do it! Talk about it in the LAN and get feedback on your idea and your plan and your vision. The definitions of your event will tie in closely after you've defined what your group is and why it exists, so make sure you have a clear understanding and leadership to support the goals and intent of the group. Sure, conducting events that align with the event support programs(s) from LEGO have nice perks, but they don't have to be the only perks to consider. You can use smaller events, events with less public or even group outings as events that will strengthen the group as a whole.

c. Types of events

Here are just a few specific types of events that could be used to kick start new ideas or start your RLUG off with direction to get some events under your belt! Many times, you'll get connected to multiple people and resources that will lead to more opportunities for events.

- **Libraries and community centers** – Most libraries have a display case for seasonal events, like summer reading programs. Getting in with a popular library becomes great exposure and helps the community appreciate the hobby.

- **Museums** – Depending on the interests within your RLUG, you may find museums that feature pop art as a great place to carry out events and demonstrate LEGO as a medium through the skills of your members.
- **Local businesses** – Many businesses are looking for something to create hype and word of mouth advertisement to stand out. If you can find a good partnership with a business where you both have something to offer each other, events and displays can be a very rewarding experience for both parties.
- **Local community and children’s events** – Especially in the summer, many communities will have festivals and you could have a booth for displaying creations or offer activities to the public. An example would be a county fair or township block party.
- **Schools** – Schools can be a great place to get connected with large groups of parents and children that might be interested in the events and abilities of your RLUG. After school programs, build days, mascot builds for display cases, etc are all great ways to get those connections started.

3. Event Life-Cycle

a. Event Initiation

No matter if your event comes from an external request or thought up internally, you’ll need some help deciding if it’s an event the RLUG will do. Again, what the RLUG does will be a reflection of what the RLUG is and why it exists. It’s very important to have every member in the RLUG in agreement and understanding of the pillars that established the RLUG. Without this fundamental mission and vision, your events will run the risk of causing division in your RLUG, inducing stress and burnout from contributors, and possibly even perceived reputational impact with the LEGO community as well as the public you seek to engage. Do not tread lightly into the realms of events. With great opportunity comes a great responsibility.

You’re going to want to develop a system for sorting through, developing, and approving the ideas and requests for events. Each group’s model will be different. Maybe you have a committee, maybe you have 1 czar, maybe you have a clear checklist to discern if the event will meet the requirements to move on to something the group wants to put effort into. Possible questions to guide these decisions would be: “How would this event benefit the LEGO brand, hobby, and/or culture?”, “Will this event benefit the RLUG or its members directly or indirectly?”, and “Is this event in line with why our RLUG exists?” Some other criteria might be how an event would rate on scales such as Planning, people, purpose. How much planning is required, how many people are required or will be in attendance, and why would the RLUG want to be involved?

Some RLUGs have a ‘seek and be sought’ approach to events. They want to be a resource to the community they serve as much as possible in whatever form that may be. Some RLUGs want to be known for 1 thing that they only do, but they do it better than anyone else. Some just want to keep the RLUG focused on internal interactions, and that’s great as well! You’ll have to decide, as leaders, as members, and as an RLUG.

b. Event Planning

Once you've decided the event is something the RLUG wants to pursue, you better start planning. Having members experienced with industry standards of project management will help keep your events organized and streamlined. You're going to want to build timelines to make sure you're completing milestones and meeting expectations and deliverables for all stakeholders. It doesn't all have to be over the top structure, but as a general rule, the more planning you do on the front end will ensure a smooth and enjoyable event for everyone when the time for the event finally arrives. Having defined and agreed upon roles and responsibilities for the event will help keep task ownership focused and productive.

Below is a checklist Steel City LUG uses to help keep track of the most common repeatable items when involved in events to help streamline the activities for the event leader(s).



c. Event Execution

If you've done your job well during the planning phase, event execution will be much easier, especially after you have learned from your experiences of past events.

Communication is key when organizing groups, and that means consistency in communication (try to avoid saying one thing then saying or doing another), repeated communication (a communication plan would include regular updates leading up to the event, an operation guide printed out for the event, and crossing over into direct emails, phone calls, forum threads as necessary), and clear communication (try to keep messages simple, short, and succinct).

Collaboration and **cooperation** will need to be the backbone of your group dynamic. If you can work as a team, the event will be best that it can be and individual members will feel rewarded for being a part of something greater than themselves. This will take time and effort to mature, and patience to endure the bumps and hurdles, but the improvements will happen and you won't even realize how far you've come until you stop and think about it. For more information on group development, refer to the [Tuckman model](#).

Chaos is going to be a part of any event. You will not be able to predict and control every aspect. How you handle those unexpected risks will be an indicator of your preparedness and ability to adapt as leaders and a group. Learn from your disasters and repeat your successes.

d. Event Closure

Well, how did it go? Write it down. Conduct a lessons learned with those who participated. Make sure to maintain the external relationships that were created or utilized during the event. Take the time to compare the reasons why you decided to carry out this event and see if the objectives were realized at the conclusion of the event. If not, why not? If so, would you still consider it an aspect to consider for initiating new events?

Document Charter

DESCRIPTION

This work group focuses on best practice sharing among the recognized LEGO User Group (RLUG) community in regards to executing and administrating adult fan of LEGO (AFOL) driven events. Although there are a variety of events this particular work group will be focusing on, what the LEGO Group defines as “AFOL Exhibitions” are events that focus on sharing unique LEGO built models with a public audience. These events are physically orchestrated by members of an RLUG by interacting directly with guests on-site.

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Version information

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May 19, 2015	Initial version	Josh Hall
June 24, 2015	Updated introduction to remove RLUG specific comments	Josh Hall
August 13, 2015	Sentence and grammar corrections	Josh Hall
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