

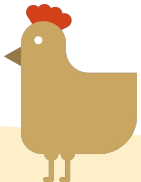
So you want a PGDay in your City?

Henrietta Dombrovskaya
Teresa Giacomini



About me

- Co-chair PGDay San Francisco 2020
- Organized events from 15 to thousands
- Edits & publishes the Citus newsletter
- Worked at INGRES, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, Citus Data & Microsoft
- I love to grow fruits & veggies, and chase my chickens



Teresa Giacomini
(She/Her)

Senior Program Manager





Hettie Dombrovskaya

(She/Her)

Database Architect



About me

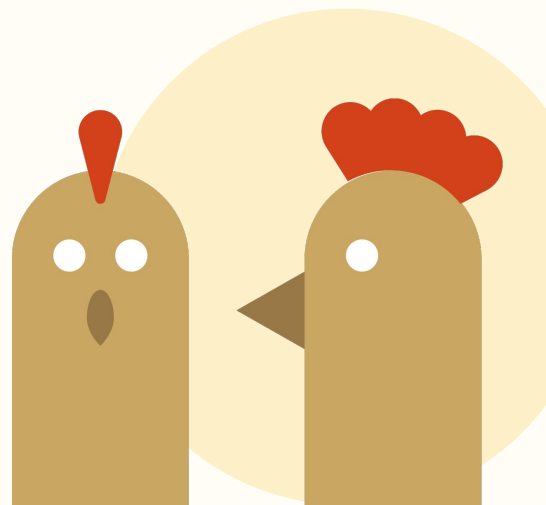
- Working with databases for over 40 years (people do not live that long!)
- I love working with app developers!
- Local organizer of Chicago PostgreSQL User Group
- Author of PostgreSQL Query Optimization
- There is no “work-life balance” - it’s called “work-life integration”!



Why PGDays?

- PG community likes to talk!
- PG conferences are **not** academic conferences
- PG documentation has it all, but what if you are not sure what you need
- You can ask **anybody about anything** in Postgres
- Everybody is happy to share

To summarize: knowledge + connections



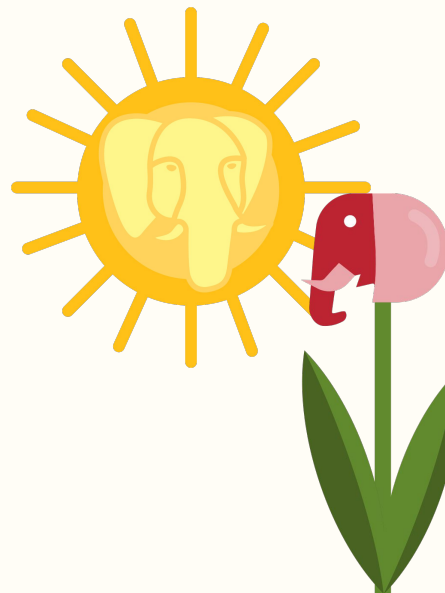
Why Local?

- Save time and money on travel
- Easier to get manager's approval
- Attract speakers that a meeting might not



Postgres User Groups & PGDays

- User Groups are important—you need to show to Pg.US that you have a local community
- Your primary audience to invite to your PGDay
- A ready pool of potential volunteers

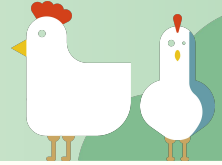


What does it take to start a PGDay

First and foremost - **you need an advocate from Pg.US**. What if you do not know anybody? [See above: Postgres community loves to talk.](#)

- Attend a conference
- Introduce yourself to somebody from Pg.US
- Tell them that you want a PG Day
- Repeat until you find somebody who will agree to advocate for your PG Day.

...and then you need



Money



People



Time



A close-up photograph of a terracotta pot filled with lush green mint leaves. A white, square-shaped plant marker is stuck in the soil, featuring a simple black line drawing of a person's face with a mustache. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "What makes a PG Day happen?".

What makes a PG Day happen?

What makes a PG Day happen?

- Org committee



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- Set a preliminary event date



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- Put together a CFP and CFP committee



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- Put together a CFP and CFP committee
- Finalize the venue



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- Finalize the dates
- **Promote**



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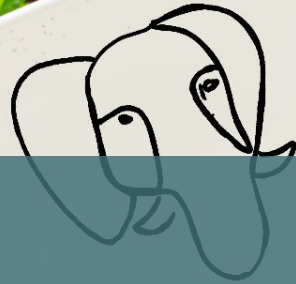
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- **Find sponsors**



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- **Find sponsors**
- ...





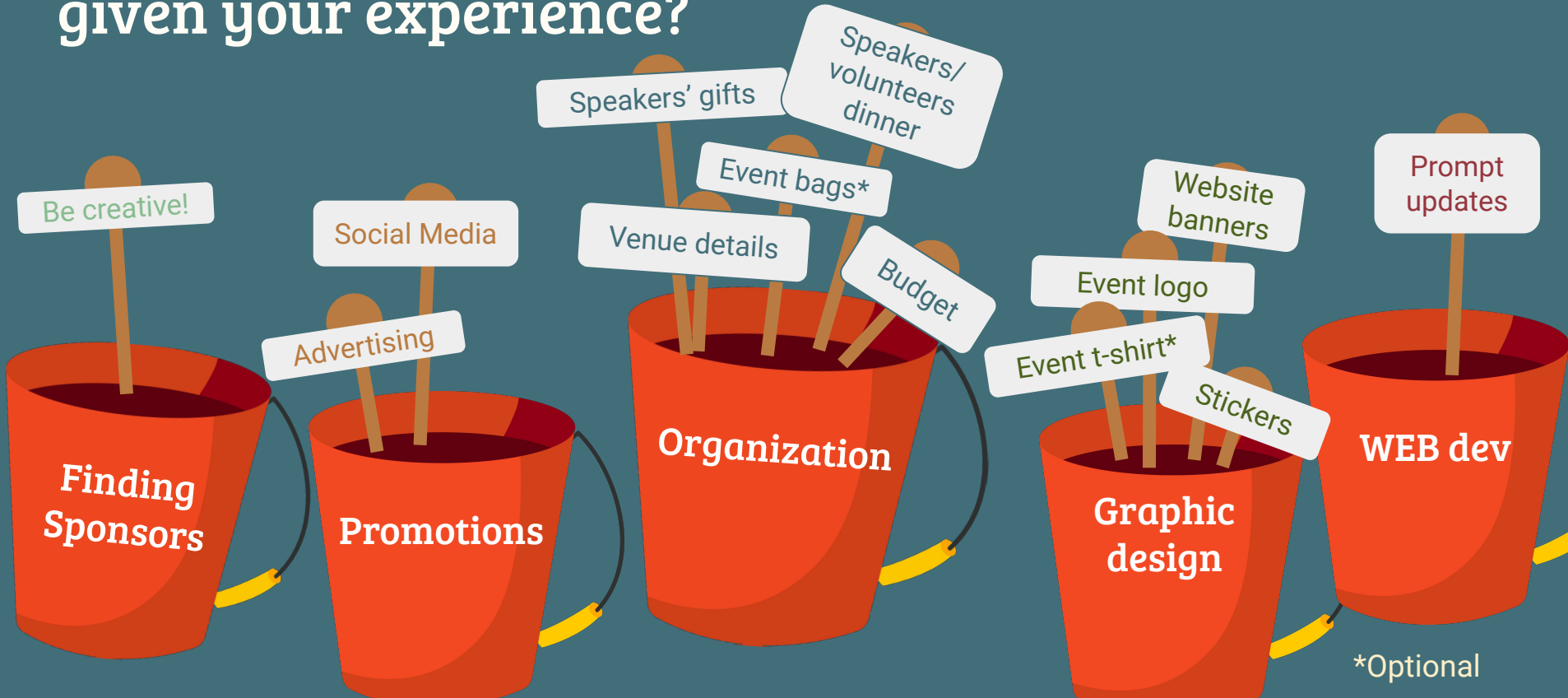
Are you the right person to start a PGDay?

Are you the right person to start a PGDay?



- If you **want**, you are the right person!
- You might need to find other right people
- You might even need to find **that** person, who will spearhead the event
- But if you **want**, you can **start**

What can you contribute before the day given your experience?

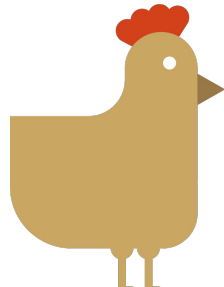


What can you contribute **one day before?**

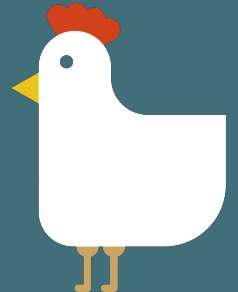
- Staying at the venue to receive merchandise from sponsors
- Running around to order prints, receive supplies, etc
- Site setup
- Bag stuffing (optional)



**What can you
contribute **on the day**
given your experience?**



- Site setup (something won't arrive until the day of!)
- Registration
- Room monitors
- Site takedown
- Time keeper
- Traffic director



What if you don't know where to start?

You're here!

- Reach out to other PGDay organizers
- Talk to organizers of other events
- **Watch this talk:** Running a Community Conference, Stacey Haysler & Mark Wong @ PGCon 2023

<https://youtu.be/Np1IrgobzOE?feature=shared>



Types of Lessons

Planning

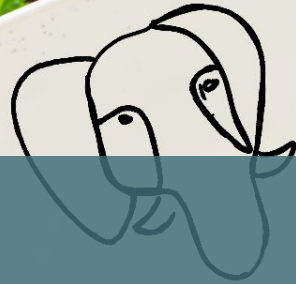


People



Execution





Planning Lessons

Lesson #1:

Choosing a date can be tricky

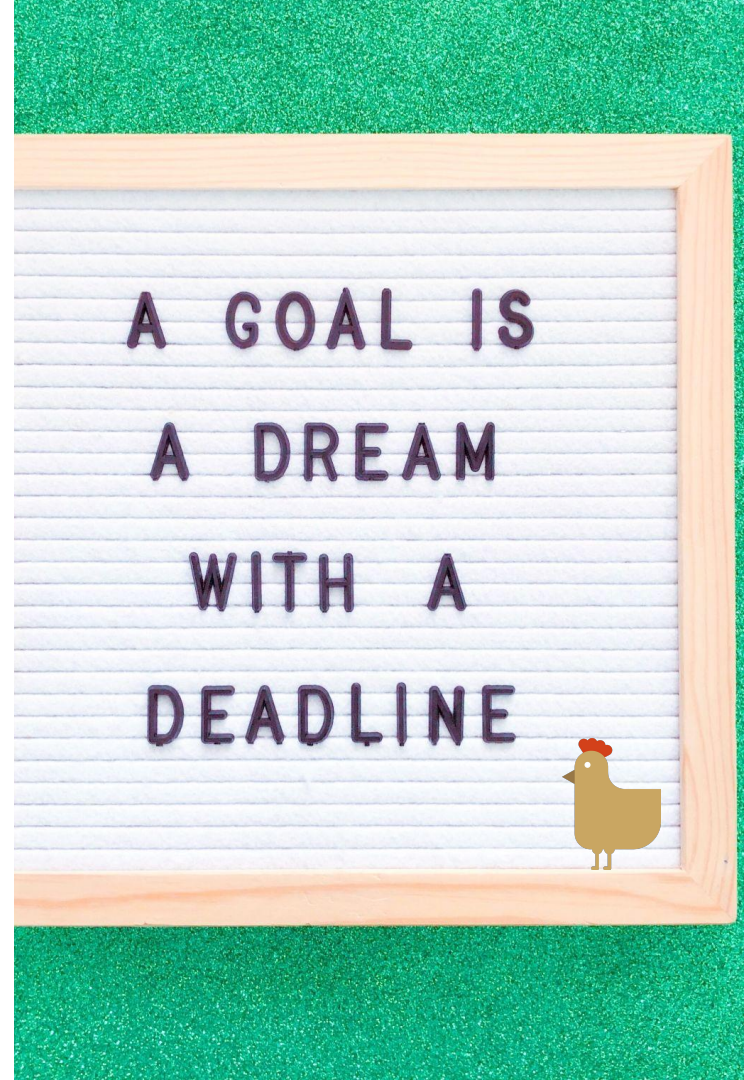
- And it's needed early to recruit your team
- Avoid holiday weekends
- Mid-week is best, Fridays work too
- Consider religious holidays too—all faiths
- Consider other events
- In your city
- In the PG world
- Examples: Oracle Open World, UN Week, Fashion Week etc



Lesson #2:


Setting goals drives behavior

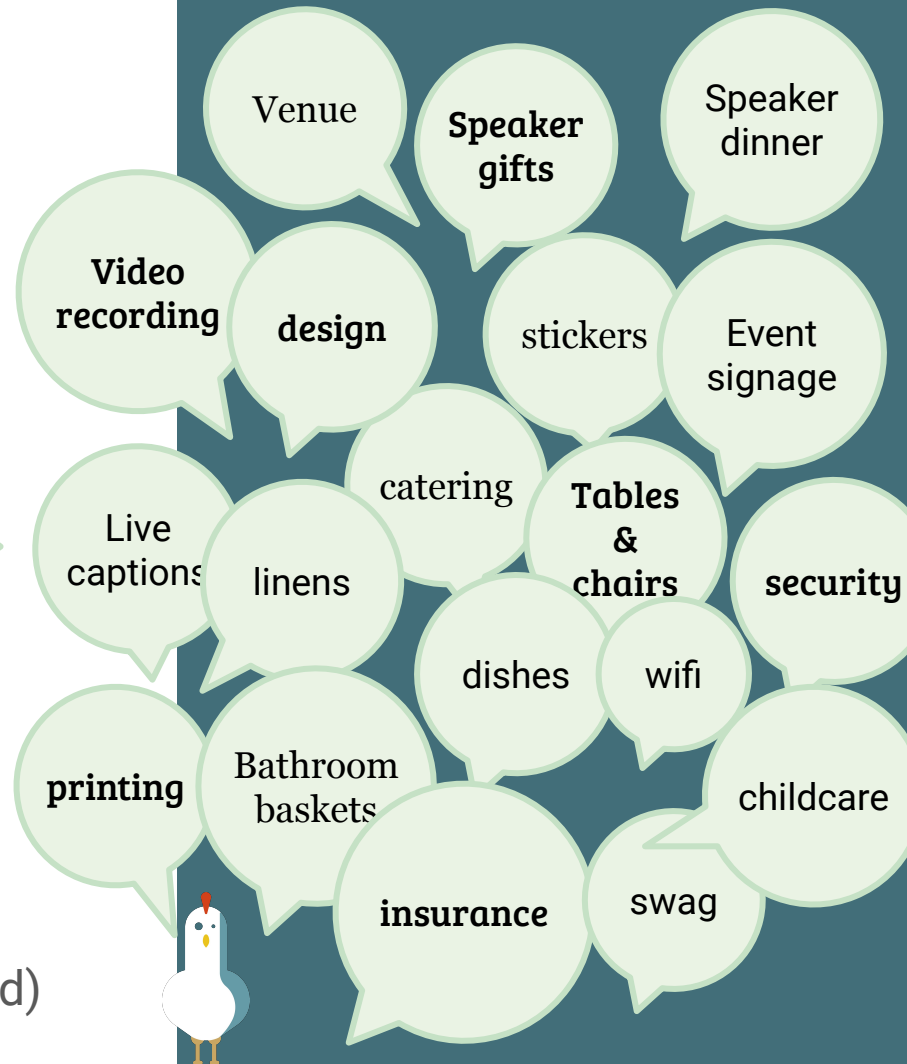
- # of attendees
- # of sponsors
- Accessibility
 - Venue
 - Captions
- One and done? Long tail?
 - Video recordings



Lesson #3:

It takes money

- Creating a budget
 - **Income:** sponsorships, ticket sales
 - **Expenses:** 
- Getting sponsors
- Working with PG Associations
 - Policies
 - Turnaround time
 - Cautious
- Doing your own thing (not recommended)



Lesson #4:

Event structure influences cost

- 1 or 2 tracks
- 1 or 2 days
- Talk length
- # of talks
- Attendee bags
- Event t-shirts



Lesson #5:

Getting sponsorships the 1st year is hard

- It is hard in general!
- Building a prospectus
 - Look at other events for ideas
 - Levels
 - Benefits
- Brainstorming outreach
 - Get the whole team involved
 - Look at sponsors of other events



Lesson #6:

Your venue matters

- **Location within the city**
 - Locals (easy to reach via transit, parking)
 - Out of town speakers (close to hotel, central)



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 - Wifi
 - A/V



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- **Layout**

- Elevator if more than one level
- Good location for sponsor tables, registration, meal service, storage
- Flow
- Meet your specific needs?
Multiple tracks, tutorials
- Stage



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- **Interesting? Fun?**

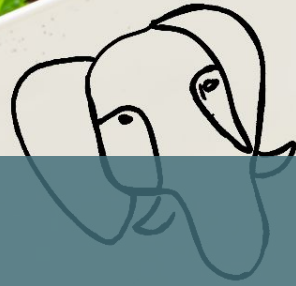


Lesson #7:

Catering options

- Do you need to use their vendor
- Can you contract on your own
- Food served in allotted time
- All day beverage
- Dietary options, labels



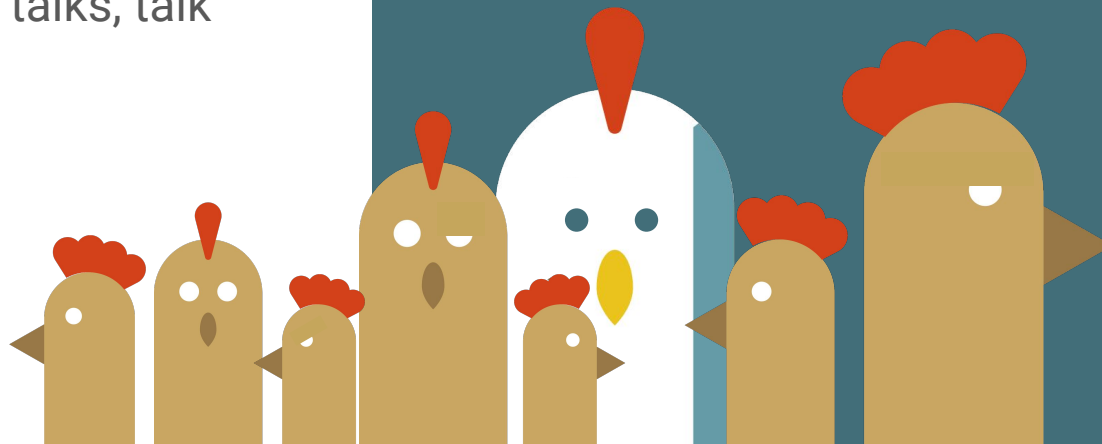


People Lessons

Lesson #8:

Clearly defined roles & responsibilities

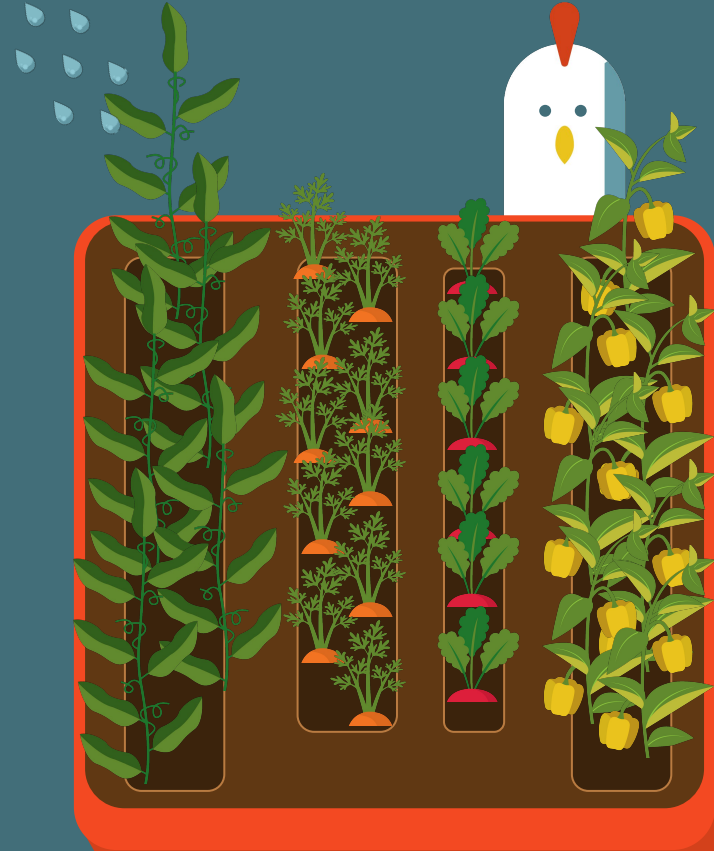
- Avoid making assumptions
- Lots of ways to organize your team
- Example: who determines # of talks, talk length



Lesson #9:

A diverse talk selection team is essential

- Required to be a community conference
- Ensures broad range of topics are considered
- Real commitment is critical
- Meeting deadlines is imperative



Lesson #10:

Not everyone has the same sense of urgency

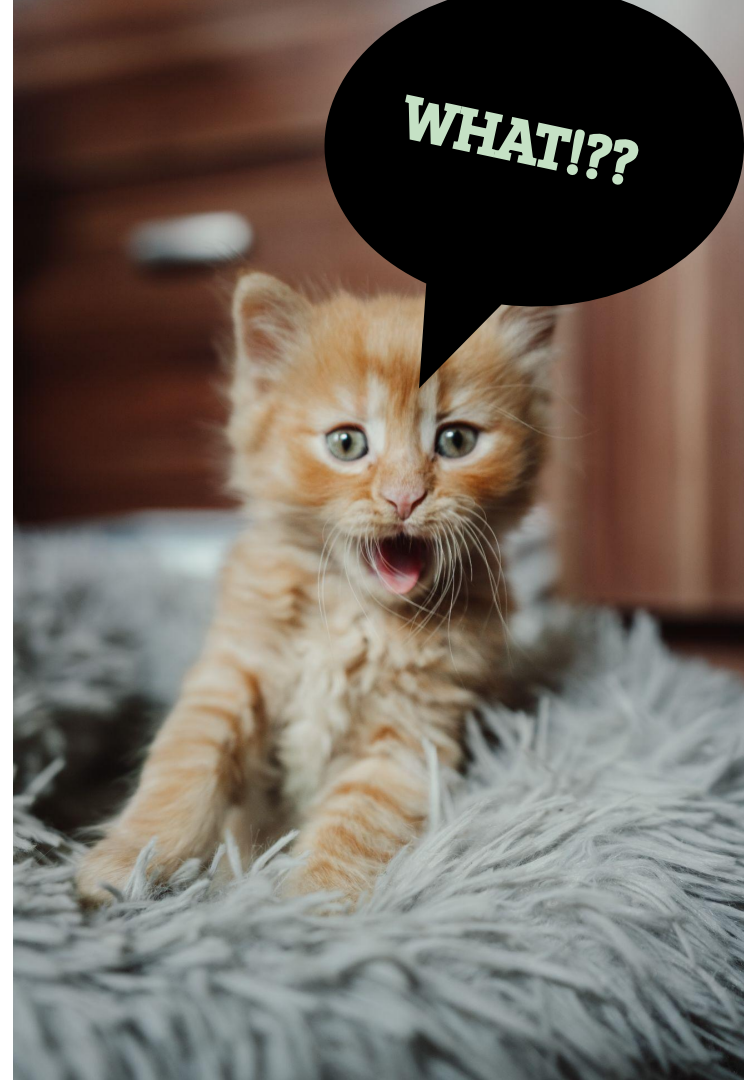
- Things take longer than you think
- Examples:
 - Some people are slow in responding to emails
 - Budget approval may take more time than you think
 - Site launch might take way longer than you think
 - USPS takes way longer than you could ever imagine!



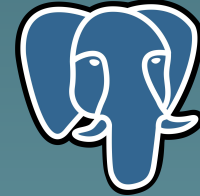
Lesson #11:

There are lots of ways to skin a cat

- Some folks like big jobs
- Some folks like quick jobs
- Some folks like to be told what to do
- Some folks like to do the telling
- **Structure your team to suit your volunteers**
- **Recruit folks to fill the gaps**
- Remember community policies



Lesson 11 examples...



Team structure PGDay SF:

Co-chairs,
Talk Selection Chair,
Web Dev, Design,
Sponsor, Code of
Conduct

Team structure PGDay Chicago:

Planning was almost
single-handed, help from
Pg.US

Team structure recommended by Pg.US:

Operations, Program,
Sponsor, Web, Marketing,
Technical (A/V),
Grants, Visa, Sprints,
Code of Conduct

Lesson #12:

Volunteers are a special kind of resource

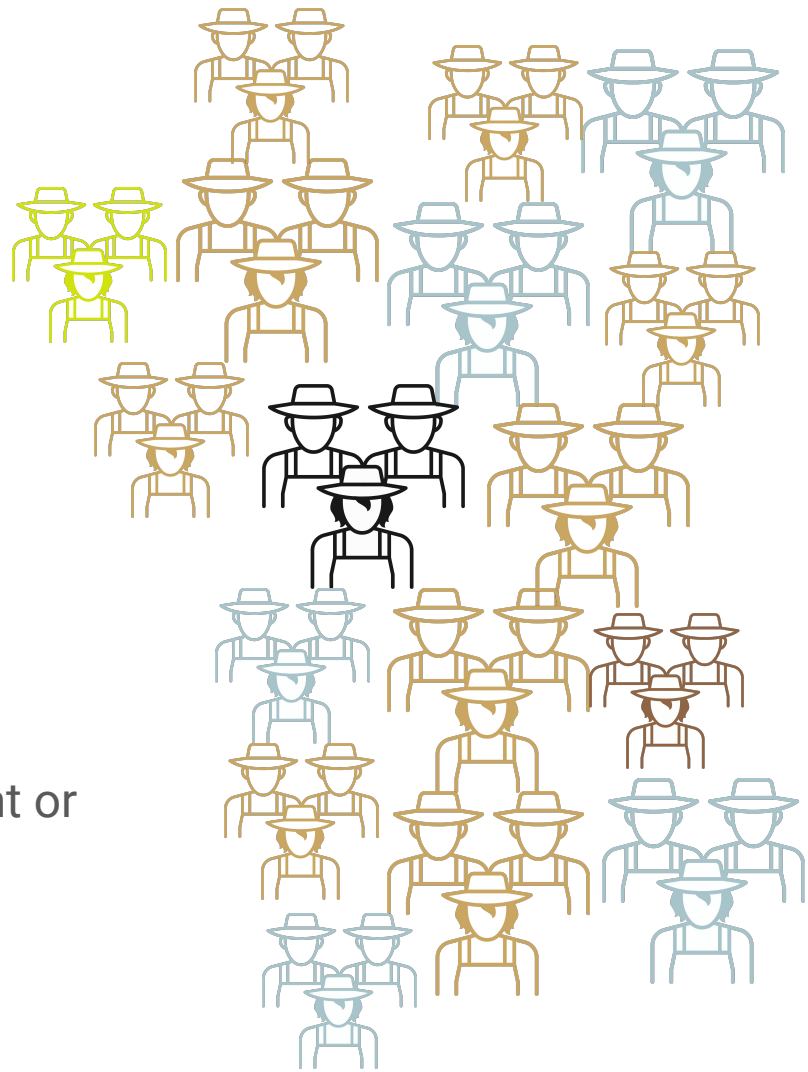
- Different company cultures
- Different individual cultures
- Different communication styles
- Organization skills



Lesson #13:

There are never too many volunteers

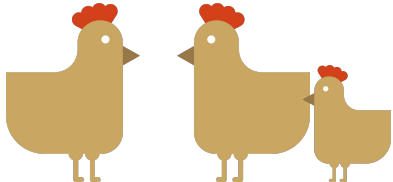
- Somebody will get sick a day before
- Somebody may have family emergency
- Somebody might not show up without explanation
- Somebody might abandon their assignment or turn out to be bad in it



Lesson #14:

Consensus is good, but it takes time

- And money
- More comprehensive input
- Probably a better result, but not necessarily worth it



Lesson #15:

So many ways to communicate

- Establish preferred methods up front
- Email
- Regular meetings
- Slack or Teams or Google Chat?
- Whatsapp
- International teams might have their preferences you never thought about!

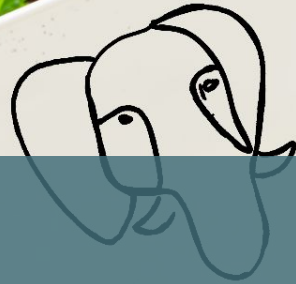


Lesson #16:

So many people to please!

- Sponsors
- Speakers
- Attendees
- Volunteers
- Postgres Association
- Companies volunteers work for





Execution Lessons

Lesson #17:

It takes time

- Individual time
- Flexibility
- Similar to scoping a technical
- **Rule of thumb = 6 months recommended**



Lesson #18:

It helps to have a web dev on your team

- Speeds up the process
- ... but you still need a second set of eyes



Lesson #19:

Promotion is more important than you think

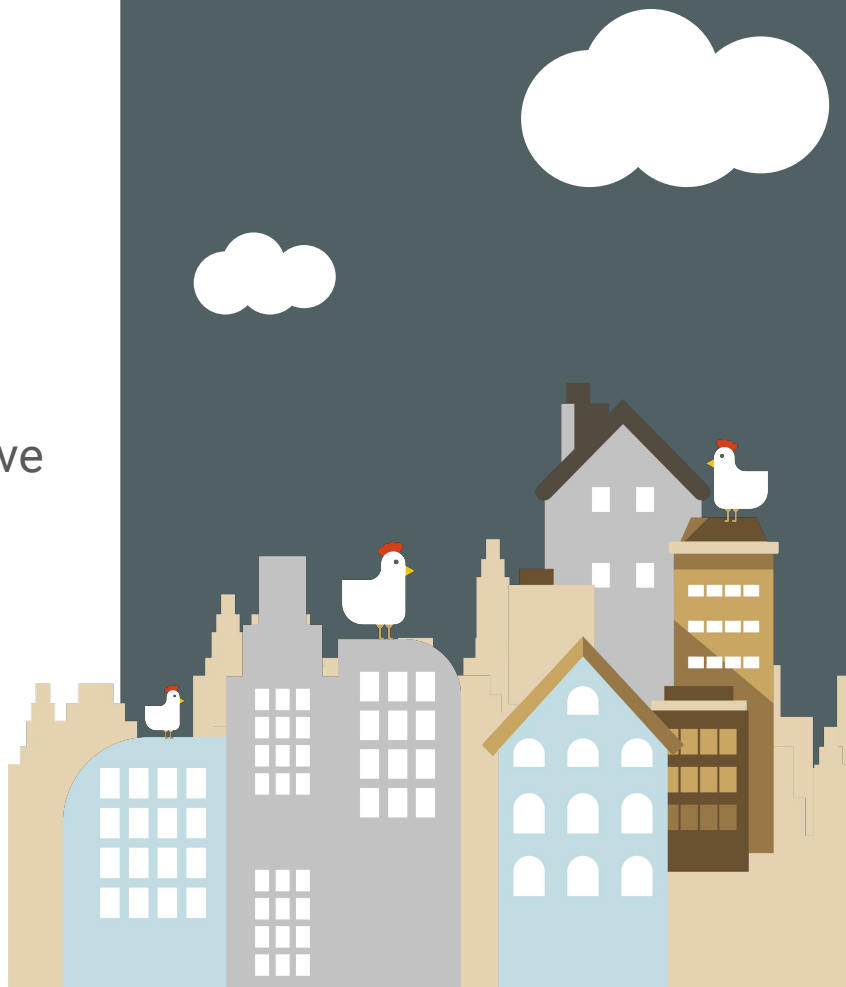
- This might be **THE** most important thing
- The social world is split
- More people promoting, the more people touched
- Encourage speakers to promote their talks
- Use the personal touch
- Stickers



Lesson #20:

Speakers need a place to stay

- No examples or learnings from us!
- A list of recommended hotels is nice to have
- Don't sign up for room block if possible
- Close proximity to venue

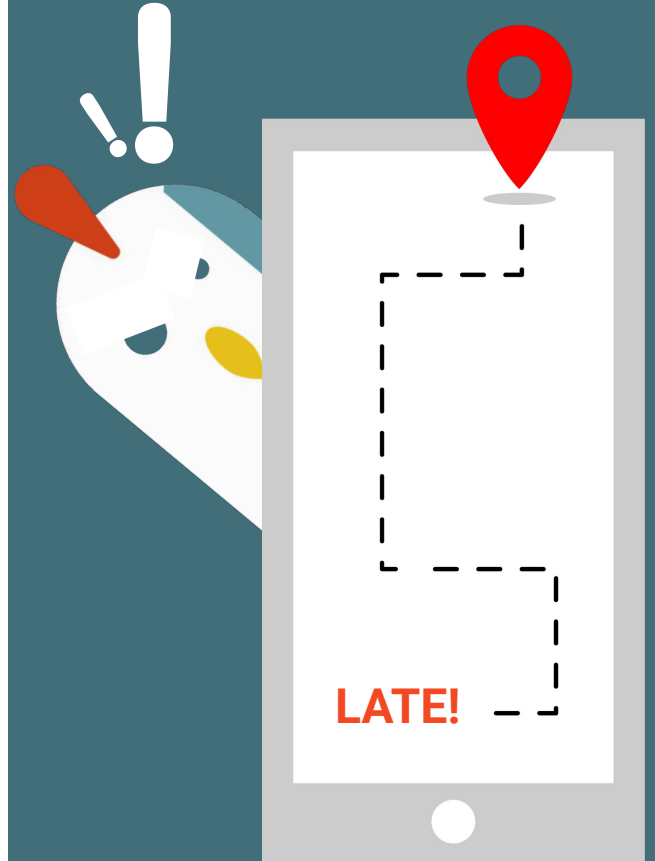


Lesson #21:

Merchandise arrives late!

- Negotiate earlier parcels acceptance
- **Example:** It can take up to **6 days** for a parcel to be delivered within Chicago city limits!

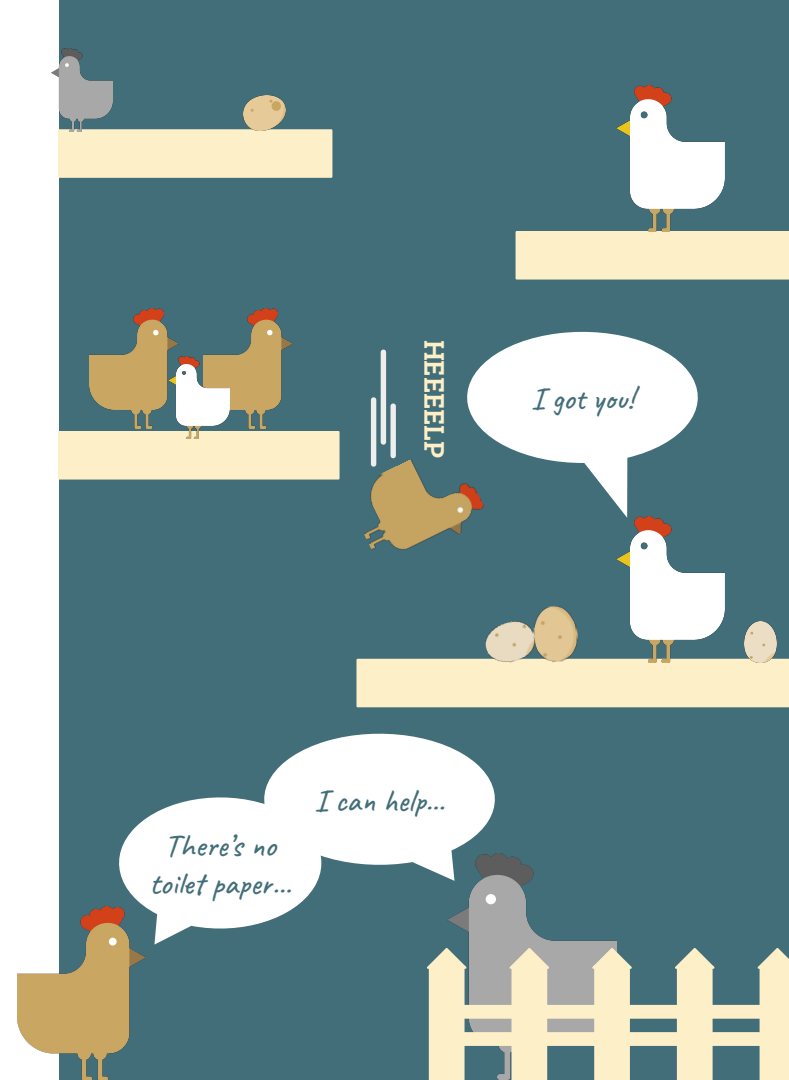
(Could you possibly know that if you are not in Chicago?!)



Lesson #22:

Be ready for surprises on the big day

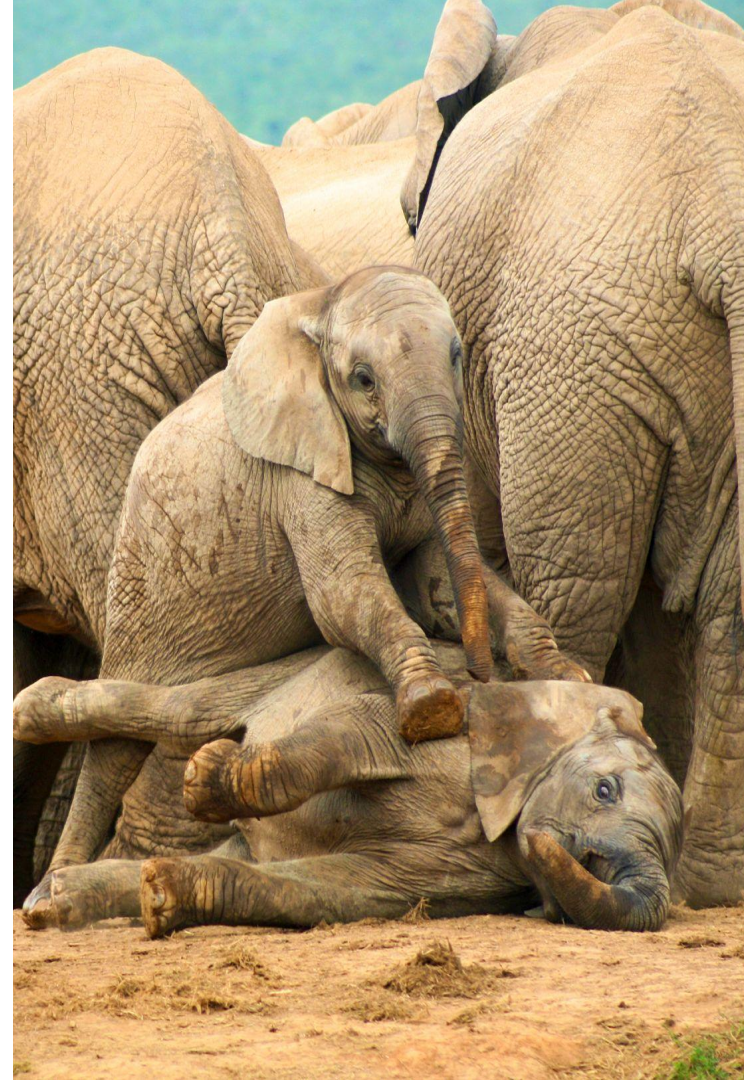
- Anything can happen on event day
- Brainstorm in advance what could go wrong
 - Weather
 - A/V
 - No show volunteers
- Have a go-to person or persons
- If possible have staff easily identifiable
- Recruit more volunteers than you need



Lesson #23:

Social events are fun, but not required

- People want / need to have unstructured time
- Build community
- Have a list of nearby gathering places
- Consider noise - can people hear each other
- Consider a sponsorship to cover costs



Lesson #24:

Showing gratitude

- Critical in a community
- Verbal gratitude
- Speaker gifts
- Volunteer team gifts
- Hand-written notes
- Public appreciation - at event, on social media
- Sponsor acknowledgement



Lesson #25:

So VERY gratifying

- What do you get from being part of a team?
- Thrill from starting something new
- Satisfaction from seeing a job well done



PGDay Chicago 2024

April 26, 2024



CFP is open!

Closes January 15, 2024

<https://2024.pgdaychicago.org>



Questions?





Hettie Dombrovskaya

DRIV



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 Microsoft

Thank You

