Moving the Needle

How SF Ruby got to 18%

http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwr/839344289/
About me

sarahmei (twitter, github)
SF Ruby Meetup

• Big!
• Active!
• http://meetup.com/sfruby
The Problem

- 98%
- 2%
Jan 2011??

50%  50%
Coming up...

• Our process
• What we’ve gotten out of it
• Why is it so hard?
XTREME COMMUNITY

1. Set goals
2. Do events
3. Cultivate people
XTREME COMMUNITY

1. Set goals
2. Do events
3. Cultivate people
Set goals

Focus on something you can fix.

Be specific!
Do Events

Do the right kind of events.

Target specific audiences.
Tie in your goals
Logistics
Logistics

The easy part!
Logistics

- Offer childcare
- Offer nursing/pumping space
- Get sponsors
- Have an afterparty
MEN

- Yes!
- Get them involved
- They make great volunteers
- Give volunteers drink tickets for the afterparty
- W2.0 attendance model
Cultivate people

• **Both sides** of the pipeline

• For women who’ve come to an event:
  • Follow up!!
  • Plan a series
  • Recruit women from the 1st to help with #2
Get new women in

- Talk your events up, to everyone you meet
- Buy a domain, throw up wordpress...UPDATE it
- Print business cards, give them out constantly
- Blog about it on your technical blog
- Talk about it on facebook & twitter
- Do talks, BoFs, meetups, etc., at conferences
Get new women in

• Be visible in your community
• Put your name on events
• Contribute to the mailing list
• Ask questions after talks
• DO TALKS!
What did we get?

Expected:

• More women at monthly meetups
• Some who haven’t come to a workshop (critical mass!)
What did we get?

Unexpected:

• More active & lively mailing list
• More varied & interesting talks
• More women volunteering to GIVE talks
• MEN feel comfortable not knowing all the answers
• More newbie-friendly events, by and for all genders
Why is this so hard?

- You need a woman (or 2) willing to be visible.
- You need leadership who thinks it’s worth doing (or at least, won’t get in the way)
- It’s a social problem.
Why is this so hard?

• You need a woman (or 2) willing to be visible.

• You need leadership who thinks it’s worth doing (or at least, won’t get in the way)

It’s a social problem
Questions