Getting Votes and the Drive for Score

A public service announcement for young and old alike

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So what's it all about?

You might be a brand new player. You might have been around for a long time. You might've stopped reading a sentence or two ago. Just between you and me, the people who stopped reading are idiots. Shhh. It'll be our little secret. But no matter who you are, there's one thing you should be looking for: votes. Votes are the ultimate sign of success--anyone can complete a task, but the true sign of success is a lot of votes. But from time to time, the voting process on SF0 can be a bit bizarre.

Why do your best tasks get no votes, when some of your other tasks get a bunch? What is that magic X-factor that gets you votes? Keep reading to find out.

Beforehand: The preparations

There's a couple things you can do before even starting a task to make sure that you'll get votes for it. The first thing you can do is to **pick the right task**. Above all, play to your strengths. If you're artistically inclined, try an art task. If you're a programmer, then there are tasks out there for you too. But don't be afraid to **stretch your horizons**. Trying new things can get you score as well!

Another way to get votes: **be friendly**. It seems simple, but if nobody likes you, nobody's going to vote for you. Don't be afraid to declare someone a friend or strike up a conversation with them. And don't be stingy with your votes! While trading votes isn't cool, if you reward tasks that really deserve it, people will be more likely to vote for you if you've shown them kindness first.

When you're ready to start completing your task be sure to have all the tools you're going to need to **document the task**. A camera of some sort is your best friend when completing tasks.

Completing the task: The main event

There are a lot of things that go into making a good task completion. One is originality. Don't be afraid to interpret the task in your own way. A **creative interpretation** of a certain phrase and adapting a task to your environment are great ways of attracting votes. But be sure that you don't make the task too much easier in your interpretation. For example, The High Score Task says "Put up a flag on top of the Sutro Tower." While planting a flag on top of a model Sutro Tower might be funny, it doesn't deserve 1000 points, and you'll more likely get people yelling at you than votes.

When you've figured out how you're going to interpret the task, **go big**! Don't be afraid of looking like a fool. There's very few ways you can embarrass yourself that won't end up getting you votes. Enlist the aid of friends, or ask to **collaborate** with a fellow SF0 player. Tasks with more collaborators are more likely to attract attention.

Above all, the best thing you can do to get your task votes is **document well**. Take **pictures**, get **video**, capture **audio** clips. Make sure the pictures are clear and show everything that went on. If players can't see what you did, they're probably not going to vote. The more you show them, the better your task will be.

After the task: Where do we go from here?

You're not done yet. In fact, you've got some of your most important work ahead of you. The first step, of course, is to **upload** all the images and video and whatever other documentation you got during the course of the task. Always make sure to **give your pictures captions**, it looks like you didn't put much effort into it if they've got titles like "DSC0823000.jpg."

Of course, you can't just submit a pile of photographs and video as your proof. One of the most important things you can do to ensure that you'll get votes is to **write well**. The better you write, the more descriptive, humorous, or enthralling your writing is, the more likely you are to succeed. Don't be afraid to run the text through a **spellchecker** before you submit, or better yet, **use Firefox** and when you go to write up your report, you'll automatically see what you've spelled correctly.

You're almost there. This next one is one you might not think of offhand: **submit it at the right time**. The time you are most likely to get people to look at your task and vote for it is when it is still on the **front page**. The more people submitting tasks when you submit yours, the less people will end up seeing your task. So choose a time when less people are submitting tasks, but when people are still looking at the website. Submitting your tasks in the **evening** is often a good way to do this; tasks will often stay on the front page the whole night and into the next day.

 The next best way to **make sure people see your task** is to, once again, make sure that you've made **friends**. When you click the 'update' link, you'll see a page with all of the tasks and comments your friends have recently made. When you submit a task, all your friends will see it from there as well. The more friends you've got, the more people you can be sure are going to take a look at your task.

Don't ignore your completion once you've submitted it. While you don't need to thank people for every vote you get, take the time to **respond to comments** on your tasks. Don't be afraid to **defend yourself** if someone questions the validity of your completion. The best way to avoid such accusations is to read the task carefully in the first place, but if you feel you've done a legitimate job, don't be afraid to stand up for yourself and say so! And don't be afraid to **revisit your completion** even after you've submitted it. Nothing says dedication like people who continue to update their tasks even after they've finished them. And with the 'recently updated' option of organizing completed tasks, you'll be bumped up to the top for people who are looking for completions that have been recently edited.

Above all, **have fun**. If you're not having fun, take a break and think about what it is that's stopping you from having fun. **Don't stress** if a completion of yours doesn't get any votes or any comments. It can be hard for a new player to get a lot of recognition at first. And everyone has had a task they put a lot of effort into go unnoticed. It happens. Don't worry about it.

Follow these guidelines, but don't be afraid to **find your own way** and do what works best for you. Do something cool, something daring, something funny, or something awesome, and you may just be seeing one of these in the near future:

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Good luck!