

2009 SOS Submission: ASTD-RTA "Giving Back"



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Chapter Name: ASTD-RTA
Chapter ID: 4-53
Chapter Location: Research Triangle Area, NC
Chapter Membership Size: Medium (101-300)

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Description of Effort: Provide recognition to the members who contributed to the organization throughout the year. As we appreciated the efforts of our members throughout the year we also decided to give a little back to the community too by conducting a food drive.

Need Addressed: We wanted to support our engagement goal and appreciate our membership for their contributions throughout the year.

Does this effort align with your chapter mission? Yes

Does this effort align with ASTD's mission? Yes

Target Audience: Workplace learning and performance professionals in the Research Triangle Area

Costs/Resource Use: Qty Price Total Price Food and Soft Drinks 75 \$18.00 \$1,350.00 Postage for invitations 250 \$0.42 \$105.00 Appreciation Awards – ASTD Jump Drives 20 \$11.00 \$220.00 Total cost \$1,675.00 * A local printer donated the printing of the invitations and certificates and we had a cash bar for anyone interested in a cocktail.

How did you implement:

- We wanted this event to be a capstone event for the Chapter, celebrating the year and highlighting some of our member benefits and events. The event was co-planned between Monthly Meetings and Membership Teams.
- We planned the event for the first week in December to avoid any scheduling issues with the holidays.
- We identified the ways members have contributed to the organization such as writing newsletter articles, presenting at monthly meetings, leading a Special Interest Group, or Participating on a Committee and created certificates and thank you notes for the contributions. By recognizing participation, members felt good about their contributions and we marketed our member benefits and programs.
- During the event we facilitated an activity based on the "Thiagi" workshop we hosted earlier in the year. This provided members with a sample activity and got everyone involved in the meeting. It also gave us best practices and tips to share with our members during Employee Learning Week.
- We explored restaurants which could hold ~75 people and would have a "festive" atmosphere.
- Invitations were mailed to all members and advertised the event on our website and in our newsletter.
- The event was free for members and cost \$25 for non-members.
- At the event, we had several boxes set up to collect collected non-perishable food for local food bank. Volunteers offered to take the food to the food bank.
- Our Marketing Vice President solicited door prizes to add to the fun. These added to the positive energy of the event. Prizes included books, pens, portfolios, etc. Ask members for donations too. Many have branded items which they can provide free.

What were the Outcomes:

- Solidified our brand – being member-focused and focused on engagement. (Some celebrations can be all about the board. While the board was recognized for their efforts, it was not

central to the event. The event was clearly centered correctly on our members.) • Generated a list of members who wanted to be involved in 2009. • Received incredibly positive feedback from members. • Provided a great networking opportunity – many members stayed after the event and continued connecting/sharing experiences. • Collected a significant amount of food for the local food bank. • Generated Tips and Best Practices to be shared with members during ASTD Learning Week. • Approximately 31% of our membership and a few non-members attended the event. (75 people attended) • Had a lot of fun!

Lessons Learned: • Start planning earlier in the year. We started in October for a December event. This year we started planning in July. • Call people getting recognized to personally invite them to the event. • Track participation and metrics used for awards throughout the year. Since it was our first annual Appreciation Recognition Celebration many of the calculations were conducted at the end of the year. • Align your recognition to your goals. For example, one of our main goals was to increase engagement so many of our awards were for participation in the chapter including – most events attended and volunteers. • Ask for volunteers to help plan the event. Divide up the tasks so small pieces can be delegated. • Have a microphone for better sound. • Take pictures at events throughout the year so we can have a slide show running at the event. (Part of our plans for 2009). • Advertise requests for door prizes in the newsletter or on your chapter website. • To minimize costs, get a sponsor for the event.