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| **Chapter Name** | ASTD-Cascadia |
| **Chapter Number (ex. CH0000)** | CH8029 |
| **Chapter Location (City, State)** | Oregon and SW Washington |
| **Chapter Membership Size** | Large (301+) |
| **Contact Person for this Submission:** | Suzanne Bader |
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| **Phone Number:** | (503) - 753 - 6435 |
| **Chapter Board Position:** | Past President |
| **Chapter Website URL:** | <http://www.astdcascadia.org> |
| **Submission Title:** | Becoming a More Welcoming Organization |
| **Submission Description:** | In the 2010-11 Board year, ASTD Cascadia undertook an initiative to explore how to become a more welcoming organization. With the help of an outside facilitator (a former Membership Director at the Phoenix Chapter), the Board identified five focus areas: the need for objective data about membership; the need to engage volunteers/members; program content and delivery; chapter organization; and emotional connections. Board members then developed an action plan to address each area. Primary activities included: 1) review and revision of all communication vehicles to ensure easy access, navigation, welcoming tone, and relevant content; 2) structural reorganization to eliminate unneeded volunteer roles and realign positions to serve functional needs; 3) successfully recruiting a volunteer coordinator; 4) having a greater presence at Chapter activities; and 5) individually contacting close to 200 new and existing members.   In 2011-12, this theme has continued and additional improvements have been made. They include: 1) redesign of the Chapter website; 2) development of new volunteer orientation, management, and recognition practices; 3) inviting volunteers to attend board meetings on a quarterly basis to discuss Chapter operations and activities; 4) resuming quarterly member meetings; and 5) reducing prices to many programs to increase participation. |
| **Need Addressed:** | In 2009-10, ASTD-Cascadia membership was reasonably stable, program participation was high, and volunteerism was strong. In 2010-11, we were able to fill only four of nine board positions and several key leadership positions remained empty. We had no one in the pipeline for future leadership and had no succession planning process.   Many of us had theories about why we had difficulty attracting volunteers. But regardless of whether or not the causes were internal or external, it was a problem that needed to be immediately addressed to ensure the future success of the organization. Recognizing that we had room to become a more welcoming organization, we began the process. |
| **Does this effort align with your chapter's mission?** | - Yes |
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| **Target Audience:** | The target audience for this initiative were existing and potential members and volunteers. |
| **Costs/Resources Used: (include any funding you were able to get through donations, contributions, barter, etc. and how you went about getting these resources. Also include how much volunteer/board member time this effort took)** | Board members and the Chapter Business Manager (now Executive Director) planned and implemented the recommendations. In 2010-11, Board member planning time was 12 hours, board member implementation time was approximately 30 hours, and staff support was approximately 25 hours. |
| **How did you implement: (please give a brief description)** | Staff and board members worked together to implement the activities stated above. Operational-related tasks and research was completed by the Business Manager with input from the Board. Volunteer and program-related tasks were completed by board members. All items requiring policy changes were drafted by board members in consultation with the Business Manager and brought to the Board for approval. |
| **What were the Outcomes: (include financial, membership increases, target audience satisfaction levels, publicity for the chapter, and of the profession)** | In the 2011-12 fiscal year, the Chapter is seeing an increase in program participation and volunteerism. With a leaner functionally-driven volunteer structure, we have successfully recruited for all board positions for the 2012-13 year. Other key volunteer positions are also filled. Program participation has increased and our succession planning processes are working. Long time volunteers (including past presidents) are applauding the Chapter's efforts to involve them strategically in Chapter planning. |
| **Lessons Learned: (hints and tips for other chapters who may be considering a similar effort)** | It is important to take time as a board to identify and understand root causes of member participation and volunteer trends. You must then look at how the organization contributes or hinders involvement.   There is no substitute for personal connection with members and volunteers. Solicit their input on issues of importance and involve them as much as appropriate in the implementation and evaluation phases. |
| **Please list the specific ASTD chapter resources that helped guide you in the process of completing this best practice.** | This process was planned and implemented without the use of ASTD resources. |
| **Please attach any documents that help support this submission: (additional documents should be sent to** [SOS@astd.org](mailto:SOS@astd.org)**)** | [6.11 Membership Message.doc](http://forms.astd.org/download.php?q=Zm9ybV9pZD0xMSZpZD01MiZlbD1lbGVtZW50XzE2) |
| **additional supporting documents:** | [Themes from Welcoming Organization Huddle Discussion.doc](http://forms.astd.org/download.php?q=Zm9ybV9pZD0xMSZpZD01MiZlbD1lbGVtZW50XzIy) |
| **additional supporting documents:** | [6.21.11 Volunteer Letter.doc](http://forms.astd.org/download.php?q=Zm9ybV9pZD0xMSZpZD01MiZlbD1lbGVtZW50XzIz) |

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