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| **Chapter Name** | ATD Maryland |
| **Chapter Number (ex. CH0000)** | CH2030 |
| **Chapter Location (City, State)** | Ellicott City, Maryland |
| **Chapter Membership Size** | Medium (101 - 349) |
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| **Chapter Board Position:** | Director of Programs and Events |
| **Chapter Website URL:** | [https://tdmaryland.org/](http://enotification.td.org/track/click/30530608/tdmaryland.org?p=eyJzIjoiZmV2cTAzSjNmamlKai1qY0VtS3hRWGFvU1RnIiwidiI6MSwicCI6IntcInVcIjozMDUzMDYwOCxcInZcIjoxLFwidXJsXCI6XCJodHRwczpcXFwvXFxcL3RkbWFyeWxhbmQub3JnXFxcL1wiLFwiaWRcIjpcIjEyYmQ1ZWY0ZmRjODQwZWY4MzM4Y2M3Y2VjNDU2NGI1XCIsXCJ1cmxfaWRzXCI6W1wiYTZmOWVmMmNhMWY1N2MyZjQwYzdjNmYxMThmMmNlZDRjOWQ2YWY2YlwiXX0ifQ) |
| **Submission Title:** | Virtual Networking: Hassle-Free, Commute-less Connecting with Area Talent Development Professionals |
| **Submission Description:** | To attract new members and increase member engagement, the ATD Maryland chapter facilitated a virtual networking session using a video conferencing platform. In the past, the chapter has used this platform to host webinars as well as virtual meetings, but this was the first event dedicated to networking, exchanging ideas and promoting discourse about career advancement and development. This was a commute-less way that area professionals from any industry could connect with others who may be job hunting or searching for business ventures. It helped members and non-members to expand their social capital while identifying career opportunities. |
| **Need(s) Addressed? Please be specific.** | We are working on increasing our member engagement. We received feedback that due to the commute time in the Maryland/D.C. area, members may find it challenging to attend face-to-face events. I developed a survey using Survey Monkey to better understand the needs of our members as it pertains to their interests in programs and events that they would like to see. I noticed that our members desired more webinars. |
| **What is your chapter's mission?** | To provide our membership and community professional development opportunities so they can continue improving organizational performance through workplace learning and development. |
| **How does this effort align with your chapter's mission (Please provide specific examples)?** | We are using virtual network to reach members who would otherwise not attend or participate in our events. The virtual networking events has enabled members to receive professional development that focus on career growth and advancement. During this event, a career coach shared helpful information and best practices that benefited our members. Members were able to exchange contact information virtually and ask questions in the online platform. The chat room was also used by members to suggest books and other resources that would enhance others' professional skills. Our chapter seeks to encourage knowledge sharing among our members. Offline, members were given contact information for the group so they might continue to exchange ideas and network. |
| **National ATD's mission is to "empower professionals to develop talent in the workplace". How does this submission align with ATD's mission? Please provide specific examples.** | This virtual network event focused solely on career advancement and development. It brought together independent, talent development consultants as well full-time, talent development professionals. The group was diverse and included professionals of color and Millennials. A career coach helped to develop talent by sharing specific strategies, best practices and methods for advancing one's career, whether you're an entrepreneur or full-time employee. Professionals felt empowered to take their career into their own hands as we focused on a platform, "My Career Design Studio". |
| **Target Audience: (Who will benefit/has benefited from this effort?)** | This event attracted a diverse group of members as well as many non-members. One non-member mentioned that she had just had a baby and was not able to go out and network. This event enabled her to work flexibly, but still network with talent development professionals. This event also attracted Millenials who are comfortable with using video-conferencing and enjoyed the opportunity to virtually engage with other members. As this event was held during the lunch hour, it enabled many to take a short break from work to network and connect with other professionals. Many remarked that in this new, gig economy, it's great to be able to virtually network with others who may be working alone in a remote, home office during the work day. |
| **Costs/Resources Used: (include any details regarding use of resources including monetary, donations, contributions, volunteer hours, people resources, etc. and how you went about getting these resources)** | $0 used. I used a free platform, Zoom. It took about 5 hours of my volunteer time to develop, create and promote the event using social media (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook). We used a career coach who volunteered her time to facilitate a conversation about career developing as well as answer questions. |
| **How did you implement: (please give a brief description)** | I reached out to a career coach to invite her to speak about career development and answer questions. The coach decided to focus on "designing your career". I created event details and posted this event on our LMS, Wild Apricot. I promoted this event using Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. I used Canva as well as Adobe Spark to create promotional materials. I used our LMS to send a mass e-mail to all of our members inviting them to attend this event. We sent the videoconference information for Zoom. I followed up by sharing contact information with those who attended, we used the idea of "virtual business cards". |
| **What were the Outcomes: (Please include hard data regarding financial gains, membership increases, target audience satisfaction levels, publicity for the chapter or for the profession, etc.)** | 9 initially registered for the event online. 6 out of the 9 who attended were non-members. The event consisted of mostly non-members which was great for increasing our exposure and attracting new members. Out of the 6 who attended, 4 professionals expressed an interest in attending more ATD events and potentially, joining our chapter in the future. We discussed and developed a potential partnership with the Maryland Career Development Association. |
| **Lessons Learned: (hints and tips for other chapters who may be considering a similar effort)** | Be sure to test the platform that you are using in advance. Using Zoom enabled us to offer a video-conferencing option as well as a dial-in option. As many were at their cubicle, several did prefer to dial in and using the chat box to exchange information and ideas. You may also want to try this in the evening, after work hours and not simply during the lunch hour. |
| **Please list the specific ATD chapter resources that helped guide you in the process of completing this best practice (e.g. people, documents, policies, by-laws, etc.):** | I sought the leadership of my chapter president as I was creating this event. She gave me the autonomy and support to be creative and innovative. There was no prior precedent or model for doing a virtual networking event using an online platform such as Zoom. |
| **How did you become familiar with the Sharing Our Success (SOS) program?** | Saw or heard of SOS from another Chapter Leader |
| **Would you be willing to present on this submission at the ATD Chapter Leaders Conference (ALC)? \*Request for Proposals (RFPs) open in May of each year at** [**td.org/alc**](http://enotification.td.org/track/click/30530608/td.org?p=eyJzIjoiV19IZ3BxTXZETkVuUUx0NTlpSlVzVTh4VlpBIiwidiI6MSwicCI6IntcInVcIjozMDUzMDYwOCxcInZcIjoxLFwidXJsXCI6XCJodHRwOlxcXC9cXFwvdGQub3JnXFxcL2FsY1wiLFwiaWRcIjpcIjEyYmQ1ZWY0ZmRjODQwZWY4MzM4Y2M3Y2VjNDU2NGI1XCIsXCJ1cmxfaWRzXCI6W1wiNTYzOWQ5MmYyNjI4ZmQ3YjQ3YmRjNDRhNzYxY2IwMDliZWVkYzA3ZVwiXX0ifQ)**. Selected session facilitators receive complimentary registration.** | Yes |

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