

# Members In Motion

## or "How the New York Metropolitan Chapter Plans and Produces Its Program"

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Last year's Officers and Program Chairman must have been reading Emerson's essay on "Heroism" in which he says, "It was high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, 'Always do what you are afraid to do.'" Surely, in those ASTD planning days, the men responsible for running the show ached with pangs of fear as they conceived a revolutionary idea: let the membership plan, program and produce the year's activities for the Chapter. With more than one year's experience behind us, we know now that the decision was a good one. In other Chapters throughout the land, there unquestionably are others who at this very moment want to plan something that they are afraid to do. Perhaps a brief review of our "members in motion" may stimulate them in setting out to achieve improved meetings, which in our opinion are more thought-provoking and more fully attended.

### **The ABC's of Participation**

There's an old saying that "one learns by doing." What could be more obvious to a group of professional training men? And yet, year after year, the Chapter's experience was that the entire program for the year was being planned by as few as two people. Of one thing we

were sure: for each member to get more out of his Chapter and for each meeting to be the best of its kind, each member had to be put in motion.

### **Experience IS a Good Teacher**

Before attempting to put our members in motion, we knew we would have to take a good hard look at *our* experience with attendance, meeting time and place, type of subject presented and in general the entire Chapter's "esprit de corps." To get off the ground, four areas of research were defined:

1. Attendance patterns
2. Analysis of membership
3. Meeting time and place
4. Program subjects

### **The Case of the "No Show"**

Attendance records for a three-year period were analyzed and the results of this study were enlightening to say the least:

1. In studying attendance figures, we found that although Chapter membership had grown for the three-year period 1956-1958, fewer members, proportionately speaking, were attending the monthly meetings.
2. In fact, for a one-year period, an analysis of the attendance pattern

of individual members showed that less than half of the membership attended three or more meetings; that almost 20% attended no meeting at all. (See Figure 1.) With these statistics, we knew we had to "ring doorbells, make telephone calls, remind friends and get after good candidates for speakers."

**The Mixing Bowl**

New York City, the country's melting pot! A variety of individuals and companies. But what exactly did they represent? The textile or textbook industries? The tugboat or transportation services? One analysis of member representation is shown in Table I.

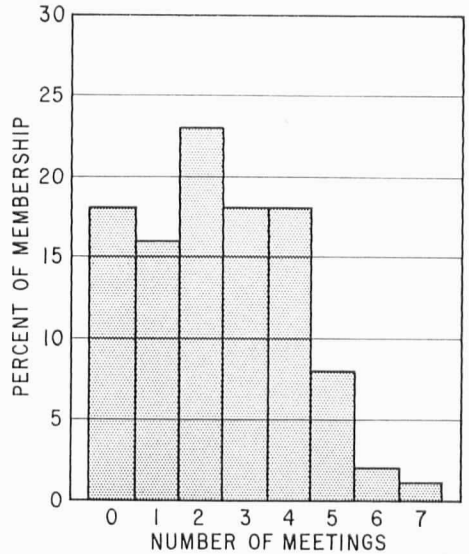


Figure 1. Meetings Attended by Membership, 1958-1959



Fort Worth Chapter Achievement Award was made to the New York Metropolitan Chapter at the 16th Annual Conference. Chapter Officers pictured here with the trophy are: seated (l. to r.) Arthur H. Pass, Chairman of the Board, American Oil Co.; Charles D. Campbell, Continental Can Co., President; John D. Hersey, P. Ballantine & Sons, Second Vice President; Joseph J. Famularo, McGraw-Hill Publishing (recently moved from Columbia Gas System), Program Committee Chairman; John F. Little, Port of New York Authority, First Vice President and President-elect; Harold B. Schmidhauser, American Management Assoc., Treasurer; and Charles A. Deneen, Royal-Liverpool Insurance Co., Secretary.

### **A Time to Meet**

Metropolitan New York is a major beehive with work locations to and from Connecticut, New Jersey, Staten Island, Long Island, east side, west side and just about all over town. To find our answer, our only solution was to go directly to the members. Let them tell us when and where they wanted to meet. Questionnaire postcards were developed and mailed out. We got our answer; dinner meetings, on second Mondays each month, in mid-Manhattan.

### **General vs. Specific**

The attendance pattern study was useful in considering another question. What kind of subject interested a majority of members? An analysis of subject matter, broken down into "general" and "specific" was made and corresponding attendance figures for each type meeting were tallied. Attendance was higher for the general subject type meeting. This corroborated our feeling that the specific type subject meeting should be reserved for the workshops;

that the membership-at-large was more interested in philosophical stimulation, inspirational messages, ideas on personal growth. For example, attendance increased 200% when the program was devoted to "motivation and management" as compared to "training scientists."

### **The Mechanics of Motion**

With the wealth of information, the Chapter leaders went to work. The Executive Council of the Chapter consists of the Officers and Chairmen for each of the following: Program, Arrangements, Membership, Chapter Advancement, Placement, etc. Major operating policy decisions are made at this level. At the conclusion of the first meeting, it was agreed that the total Chapter membership would be divided into six groups, each responsible for planning and executing a monthly meeting. As nine meetings were scheduled for the year, the Program Committee would be responsible for the other three. The Program Committee is composed of a Chairman (reporting to the First

TABLE I  
COMPANY AND MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS

Group	Members		Companies	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Industrial	128	44.4	79	42.9
2. Government	31	10.8	11	5.9
3. Banks & Insurance	29	10.1	24	13.0
4. Consultants	20	6.9	18	9.7
5. Publishers	20	6.9	12	6.5
6. Transportation	19	6.6	8	4.3
7. Educational	17	5.9	11	5.9
8. Utilities	9	3.1	6	3.2
9. Retail & Sales	7	2.4	7	3.8
10. Hotels	5	1.7	5	2.7
11. Hospitals and Broadcasters	3	1.0	3	1.6
	288		184	

Vice President) and six members. Each member of the Program Committee serves as an advisor to each of the six monthly groups.

The advisor (a member of the standing Program Committee) to each monthly group, guided by a set of "ground rules" which he helped formulate, went to work by calling together the members of his monthly group. At the first meeting a chairman for the month was elected, and in many cases, many sub-chairmen were elected to be responsible for program planning, publicity, special decorations, etc. It was the advisor's job to keep the Chapter's regular Program Committee informed to prevent overlapping or duplication of subjects and speakers. Each monthly group was allowed a small budgetary amount on which to operate, but it was amazing to see the time, paper and effort

contributed outside the limits of the budget. As last year, the plan is also to give an award this year to those monthly members who plan and conduct the outstanding meeting of the year. The award is a hand-drawn citation, one for each member of the winning group. At each meeting independent appraisals are made by ten members attending the particular meeting.

### **Spice and Everything Nice**

Spice and everything nice has been added. Most of us agree that the meetings have been more colorful, better attended and more interesting. The comments on the appraisal sheets have added verification to this. Members, in training, in motion, have felt an added boost in planning *their* meetings. After all, whom else are they for?

Skool! To better ASTD meetings.



Harold B. Schmidhauser (center), of American Management Association, is honored with plaque which recognizes ten continuous years (1950-1960) of service as the Treasurer of the New York Metropolitan Chapter. Charles D. Campbell (left), Continental Can Co., Chapter President and Arthur H. Pass, American Oil Co., Chapter Board Chairman made the presentation.