

Sharing Our Success (SOS) Submission Form

Chapter Name: Greater Twin Cities

Chapter Membership Size: Medium (101-299)

Chapter Contact Person: Mary Rapaport

Email Address: mrapaport@xceleratebiz.com

Phone Number: (952) 232-9432

Chapter Board Position: President

Chapter Website URL: www.atd-gtc.org

Submission Title: The Most Powerful Engagements Start Small

What did you do? (a 2-3 sentence summary of your effort):

Every month or two one of our board members bring together 2-3 members in similar roles at similar professional levels to facilitate a discussion about what they need as members and what programming, experiences etc.. We ask them about what they want from our chapter and they also share some of their most difficult current professional challenges. The gatherings are in-person discussions that last about 90m. Our goal was to build connections between members , to excite and recruit people who would help us build new programming, new COPs, new activities and create and take new volunteer roles they thought would add value.

Who benefitted from this effort (Target Audience) Check all that apply:

Chapter Members
Board Members
Chapter Volunteers

Why did you do it? What chapter needs were addressed?

The pandemic forced a shift in our chapter's value proposition- because we had to remain virtual, the only value we could bring was virtual content and programming. While the content was well-received, we believed our chapter's primary value proposition was helping members connect - providing opportunities for them to get to know each other, talk about common challenges, share ideas and learn from each other. So the pandemic caused a temporary a gap in the value our Chapter could provide to our members.

We also were concerned about building a bench. 4 out of our 5 executive board members had been on the board for 4+ years and we were struggling to attract fresh board members or volunteers.

We also found that engagement was dwindling, with most members shifting to spectators and attendees, rather than taking an active role in moving the organization forward. The Pandemic caused our programming and our communities of practice to languish; causing the quantity of our content shrink, the content themes to get stale and fewer people were involved. Even fewer people were offering to volunteer or were sharing new ideas or energy.

What were the measurable outcomes? (May include data regarding financial gains, membership increases, target audience satisfaction levels, publicity for the chapter or for the profession, etc.)

As a result we engaged 13+ new members to lead new initiatives and fill in open board positions. We created 2 new communities of practice and implemented a regular learning professional roundtable to engage dialogue.

We fostered a sense of ownership in our volunteers for building our programming and engaging with each other (they no longer expected the board to present them with all the opportunities - they created opportunities themselves).

And we anticipate that several of these volunteers will eventually want to join our executive board; helping build our succession plan.

This work has resulted in our ability to:

- Develop great connections between individuals one on one, reinforcing the value of membership
- Develop two new COPs with the most motivated individuals shaping and hosting them
- Recruit a volunteer liaison who works to onboard new members
- Build authentic connections between members that perpetuate beyond the discussions.
- Better understand emerging professional challenges our members face in their role etc so that we can consider new ways to help address them through programming, events, connections etc.

The members who participate in these discussions are among the most engaged members in our chapter.

What steps did you take to implement this effort? (Remember that other chapter leaders will use this to replicate the effort. Be specific)

1. FORM PEER GROUPS WITH PRECISION

We hand select participants for the small group (2-3) in-person member discussions. Members are hand-selected because they hold similar roles in similar sized companies. We use the member database to match long-time and new members and any data we have to match members who we think will have great chemistry. Putting the right people together in person is critical.

2. STRATEGICALLY DESIGN THE QUESTIONS

The questions and discussion prompts we use are specifically designed to draw out the needs of each member, what they hoped to gain by joining, what the chapter does well, what we must improve, what they struggle with in their current role, to share their experience, identify and articulate their areas of interest, common challenges, the value they get as a member, new things our chapter should be offering and why they would be helpful etc. The right questions are key to the quality of the discussion.

3. FACILITATE THE DISCUSSION WITH PURPOSE

A board member (who is also a skilled facilitator) facilitates introductions, directs the discussion, prompts participants to elaborate, showcases where members have a common connection, reinforces the member-driven value of chapter leaders, reminds members of upcoming member benefits and programming, etc. Facilitating with clear goals and outcomes in mind while helping members feel at ease in an authentic, safe space is critical.

4. IDENTIFY RECURRING THEMES AND PROMPT MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSION AND INTEREST TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

Because the goal is to get people to take ownership for something before they leave the discussion, the facilitator works to underscore where at least 2 of them may share a new idea for a chapter offering or where there are common themes about a challenge. The facilitator prompts ideas about what could be done or what would help support members who face a particular challenge the group mentions. The facilitator reinforces the leadership's member-driven belief and prompts and reminds participants of the freedom they have to create something new or to try an approach that they think might be appealing to other members, experiment with a new idea etc. We emphasize that if participants have a passion and an idea, we will support them in launching it - they have freedom to create, but they are not alone.

Is there anything you would do differently?

The only thing I'd do differently would be to do this earlier, engage more board members earlier so that we can have the opportunity to engage more members - this takes more small discussions with different members with frequency.

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| When did you start working on this effort? | Mar 10, 2022 |
| When did this effort go live? | Jun 10, 2022 |
| Approximately how many hours were spent working on this? Include an estimate of hours spent across all board members and volunteers. | 12 |
| What resources did you use? Check all that apply: | Board Members Other: Member Database |
| Which board positions were involved in the effort? | President, Vice President |
| Do you have any additional insights to share with other chapters implementing this effort? | Intentionality, authenticity and the spirit of bringing people together comes first. When people see that it is real, they come along. |
| How did you become familiar with the Sharing Our Success (SOS) program? Select all that apply: | Other: SOS email from CRC Committee Member |
| Would you be willing to apply 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. Selected session facilitators receive complimentary registration. | Yes |
| email_consent | true |