

2009 SOS Submission: Atlanta SIG/GIGs: Heartbeat of the Chapter



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Chapter Name: Atlanta
Chapter ID: CH9047
Chapter Location: Greater Atlanta
Chapter Membership Size: Large (301+)

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Chapter Title: VP SIGs/GIGs
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Description of Effort: Greater Atlanta currently has 7 active Special Interest Groups (SIGs) including Sales & Marketing, Corporate Training, Career Development, Independents Networking & Collaborating, Organizational Development and International. Each of these SIGs tailors their six events annually to the interests of learning professionals within their specific learning environment. Greater Atlanta also currently has 3 active Geographic Interest Groups (GIGs) including Northeast Atlanta/Athens, Middle Georgia/Macon and Atlanta South. Given the geographic sprawl of the city, having 3 dispersed GIGs gives learning professionals the opportunity to network and share best practices in their own backyard. Each SIG/GIG has 3+ volunteers that coordinate the speakers, locations and topics for that group. This approach allows for a shared workload and built-in networking opportunity. The 30+ volunteers that combine to make Atlanta's ten SIG/GIGs are linked through a Yahoo Leadership Group. Through this media the volunteers have the opportunity to network, share best practices and draw on other's knowledge. Chapter events are beneficial for both knowledge and networking. However, providing the freedom for each SIG/GIG to select event topics that are specialized to their professional interests allows for smaller gatherings of 15-50 people to interact. Members enjoy a more intimate experience catered to their training need.

Need Addressed: Increased value to members, additional networking opportunities, more specialized topics

Does this effort align with your chapter mission? Yes

Does this effort align with ASTD's mission? Yes

Target Audience: Training professionals in Georgia (members and non-members of ASTD Atlanta)

Costs/Resource Use: Each SIG/GIG is given the opportunity to submit a budget for the calendar year. The average expense per SIG/GIG event is ~\$50-100.

What were the Outcomes? The outcome is 10 active and healthy SIG/GIGs that are each holding 6+ events in 2009. This amounts to 60+ opportunities for local members of ASTD to network and professionally develop. The SIG/GIGs are run solely from the efforts of volunteers. The volunteers get the opportunity to host relevant topics and gain professional contacts, while attendees of the events learn about important industry trends and the projects of other local training professionals.

Lessons Learned:

1. The success of a SIG/GIG is determined by the dedication of its volunteers.
2. Active SIGs/GIGs add value to the chapter.
3. SIG/GIG leaders become the feeder for Chapter leadership / board positions.