

2010 SOS Submission: Northern Rockies Chapter Co-Sponsored Networking Event



Submission Date: 6/4/2010 8:11:40 PM

Chapter Name: Northern Rockies

Chapter ID: CH6200

Chapter Location: Fort Collins, CO

Chapter Membership Size: Small (Less than 100)

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Chapter Title: President

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Description of Effort: ASTD-NRC partnered with the local SHRM chapter (NCHRA) and the local coaches alliance (Northern Colorado Coaches Alliance) to host a large networking event in June 2009 which attracted 80 attendees. The two hour event from 5.30-7.30 included appetizers & drinks, a 5-7 minute presentation from the president of each organization describing their mission and upcoming events as well as three rounds of structured networking in groups of 4-5 made up of people from different organizations. Each group had staffed tables to answer questions and provide literature and membership information. Prizes were drawn near closing awarded by the presidents of each organization. Last, answers to the three structured networking questions were shared after the event in an opt-in basis

Need Addressed: There is little duplicate membership across these three organizations even if all have a common mission to support personal and professional development, and all are based in Fort Collins. Furthermore, the vast majority of members in each organization were not even aware of the other organizations' existence or mission. Our goal was to bring members and prospective members from each organization together so they could learn more about all three organizations, our common and complimentary mission to improve workplace performance, and to build a network of fellow professionals with aligned interests.

Does this effort align with your chapter mission? Yes

Does this effort align with ASTD's mission? Yes

Target Audience: Members of the three organizations and nonmembers who were not familiar with the other organizations.

Costs/Resource Use: Cost for the appetizers, sodas and room was \$15 per person including tax and gratuity which came to \$1200 for the 80 attendees.

How did you implement: Planning sessions began in January for the June event. ASTD-NRC provided the leadership. We had three face-to-face planning meetings and several teleconferences with follow up by email. NRC secured the location, all helped plan the event and the agenda. Each group marketed to its own members and we divided up a list of others to target. Each group accepted registrations but one group generated name tags. Cost was split in proportion to the number of attendees registered through each group. There was no fee charged although attendees indicated in the follow up survey they would gladly pay \$15 which is what it cost. More showed up than registered and we were at the rooms' capacity.

What were the Outcomes: Each group thought it was worth the expense and the effort in terms of information shared, interest generated and new members. NRC generated two new members but more importantly significantly increased awareness of ASTD and the ASTD mission. Most attendees commented

that they had never heard of ASTD or had no idea what we did. All attendees who returned surveys indicated high level of satisfaction with the event, recommended it be repeated 2x or 4x per year, and said they would gladly pay \$15 or more to attend in the future.

Lessons Learned: Start early and partner with larger groups like SHRM who have many members not familiar with us. Find good partners to work with. Offering it for free the first time reduced the risk for people to attend, especially since most did not know about the other groups.

Specific ASTD chapter resources that helped guide you in the process of completing this best practice:
Nothing specific. Suggestions from others at ALC to try a networking event.