**~~~~SOS Submission: Metro DC Chapter  
SOS Title: Career Services Portfolio**

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| **Submission Date:** May 2014 **Chapter Name:** Metro DC ASTD Chapter  **Chapter ID:** CH2034 **Chapter Location:** Metro Washington, DC Area **Chapter Membership Size:** 400 Plus | **Contact for this Submission:** Pam Marshall **Email Address:** dir\_career\_services@dcastd.org **Phone Number:** 703-343-3190 (Pam Marshall)  **Chapter Title:** Director of Career Services **Chapter Website URL:** [www.dcastd.org](http://www.dcastd.org) |

*When responding to each area, please provide information about who, what, when, how, why, where, and to what degree where appropriate. Also, please be specific and provide enough detail that would allow a leader from a different chapter to pick up this document and mimic your effort.*

**Description of Effort:**

The Metro DC Chapter of ASTD has had a Career Services portfolio for years, but it had been on autopilot. As the new Director of Career Services, I had some fresh ideas, and in speaking with the other Board members, we realized we could do a lot with this portfolio to add member value and engagement.

Since January 2014, we have rolled out or updated the following Career Services programs:

* Launched Career Connections (a monthly Webinar/discussion series for job seekers to connect virtually to share best practices, lessons learned, job leads and tips. Each session also focuses on a specific career development topic, for example ‘Using Social Media in Your Job Search’).
* Launched the Career Connections LinkedIn group (which Career Connections participants—and others—can use to stay in touch in between meetings, and to share information. This is a sub-group of the Metro DC ASTD Chapter’s LinkedIn group).
* Launched a Featured Employer program pilot (Featured Employers along with their current open position(s) are listed on the main Chapter Webpage, as well as in the Beltway Bulletin, our monthly eNewsletter which reaches an audience of 4,000 plus).
* Job Board/Posting Service—conducted research and compiled job board best practices to determine if our service (we use Simply Hired) could be improved. We decided to stay with Simply Hired, which came out according to our research as one of the top job posting subscription services.
* Consultant Referral Service (CRS)—CRS is designed to help Metro DC area independent training consultants and potential clients to find each other. It includes a searchable database. We developed marketing materials to distribute at monthly meetings and an announcement for the Beltway Bulletin to increase awareness about this service, and will recruit a volunteer to market the service to local companies.
* Formal activities for job seekers and hiring managers at Chapter networking happy hours—each happy hour (we hold approximately four per year) includes an activity specifically for job seekers and hiring managers (for example, a resume drop box).
* Career Service announcements at monthly meetings—we ask job seekers to introduce themselves and let the group know what type of position they are looking for; additionally, hiring managers—or those who know of open positions—also introduce themselves and explain what type of candidate they are looking for.

The following will be rolled out later this year:

* Promote and create greater awareness of National ASTD Career Development Community of Practice events (such as Career Navigator, Career Development Week in September)
* A career development theme at our July dinner program (which will include a panel of hiring managers and a career coach)
* Wrap Up Featured Employer pilot and decision on rolling this out as a more permanent program
* Outreach to local resume writers and career coaches who may be willing to partner with the Chapter and provide discounts to our members

**Need(s) Addressed (please be specific):**

As stated below (in ‘How Does this Effort Align with your Chapter’s Mission?’), many of our members join the Chapter because they are interested in professional and career development. Many also join because they are actively looking for employment in our field. Creating and improving our Career Services portfolio does the following:

* Provides value for our members (who learn best practices of others, learn about new job search strategies, job openings in the training and development field, connect with local employers with a need for learning and development professionals).
* Increases member engagement (job seekers connect with each other, and with the Chapter, non-members learn about Chapter resources and how Chapter can assist them with their professional development).
* Helps ‘match up’ members interested in new opportunities and independent consultants with local employers/hiring managers/businesses.

**What is your chapter’s mission?**

“Our mission is to enrich the knowledge and skills and increase the impact of our constituents in their workplace learning communities.”

**How does this effort align with your chapter mission (Please provide specific examples)?**

Our members join the Chapter because they are interested in professional and career development. Many join because they are actively looking for employment in our field. Improving the Career Services portfolio provides value for our members and increases their engagement with the Chapter. It also makes them more valuable contributors in their workplace.

**\*ASTD National Mission:** ***Empower professionals to develop knowledge & skills successfully.\****

**How does this effort align with ASTD's mission (Please provide specific examples)?**

The Chapter’s Career Services programs are designed to empower our members by providing resources to help them develop the skills and knowledge to advance their careers.

**Target Audience (Who will benefit/has benefited?):**

* Metro DC ASTD members (specifically, those seeking jobs or new career opportunities, or to further their professional development)
* Non-members (the Career Connections Webinars are open to non-members, who by attending are introduced to Chapter benefits and resources, job postings and CRS database is open to all)
* Local employers (who can advertise open positions on our Website, participate in our Featured Employer program, and who can use our Consultant Referral Service)

**Costs/Resource 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.)*

Costs: At this point, we have not incurred any additional monetary expenses.

Resources:

* **Three dedicated and enthusiastic Career Services volunteers** (who put in approximately 10 hours per month for first 2 months—this has dropped significantly now that initial research has been completed)
* We are using **Adobe Connect** as the platform for the Career Connections Discussion/Webinars. The Chapter already had a license for this.
* We use **Simply Hired** as our Job Board. This does not cost the Chapter anything (employers pay $50 per month to list jobs—Simply Hired gets 50% of this for each listing).
* Hosting a group on **LinkedIn** (which is free)
* We use **Survey Monkey** to survey members (the Chapter already had a license for this)

**How did you implement?** *(Please give a brief description.)*

* **Career Connections**—we schedule and announce monthly Webinars via Wild Apricot. The Director of Career Services facilitates the discussion, or brings in guest speakers. Participants provide input on career development topics. Each session has the same format—introductions, members share updates, facilitated discussion on a specific career development topic, then open position updates are shared. We follow up by sharing a link to a recording of the session, along with any slides (which include open position information), and use surveys, chat comments, and the LinkedIn group to collect feedback.
* **Career Connections LinkedIn Group**—we created this group as a sub-group to the Metro DC ASTD Chapter’s LinkedIn group, and encourage Career Connections participants to join and use it to stay in touch and post updates in between monthly discussions. The Director of Career Services manages the group.
* **Featured Employer Program Pilot**—Employers (company name, with link to Website, and name of open position, with hyperlinks), are listed on the main Metro DC ASTD home page, which provides greater visibility than our job posting site. Featured employers are also listed in the Beltway Bulletin, the Chapter’s monthly newsletter, which reaches an audience of about 4,000 readers (goal is to provide greater visibility for local employers and to increase engagement with the Chapter). We found employers to participate in the pilot by reaching out to those who had recently posted open positions with us (or to those that we knew about from announcements at our monthly dinner programs). The pilot will run through the summer, and we will follow up with the employer participants for their feedback. If successful, we will implement the program (Featured Employers will pay a fee, which is TBD, but will be higher than our current fee of $50 per month to post a position on our job board).
* **Job Board/Posting Service**—we use Simply Hired as our job posting service. It costs the Chapter nothing, and employers complete the online form to list positions (so that we do not need a volunteer to do this**, l**owering our level of effort). Simply Hired gets half of the monthly job listing fees, which are currently $50.
* **Consultant Referral Service**—we built a searchable consultant directory in Wild Apricot which includes the following consultant categories: Business Skills, Career Development, Coaching, eLearning/Training Technologies, Human Resources/Compliance, Instructional Design, Management/Leadership Development, Organization Development, Performance Improvement, Technical Skills Training, Training/Learning Management. Consultants pay $90 per year fee to be listed in the directory. We will be implementing a marketing campaign (and are recruiting a volunteer to assist with this) to promote this service to local companies with a need for training and development consultants.
* **Promotion of National ASTD Career Development Community of Practice events** (such as Career Navigator, Career Development Week in September) will take place as announcements during the Career Connections Webinars and via the LinkedIn group, and also possibly via email announcements or the Beltway Bulletin.
* For our career development focus for the **July dinner program**, we will invite a panel of hiring managers and a career coach as panelists, and will include a less expensive dinner (perhaps sandwiches), to appeal to job seekers.
* Outreach to **local resume writers and career coaches** who may be willing to partner with the Chapter and provide discounts to our members—we will identify these from our member database, or from National ASTD’s Career Development Community of Practice (ideally, we are looking for coaches who have a training or development background or knowledge of our field).

**What were the Outcomes?** *(Please include hard data regarding financial, membership increases, target audience satisfaction levels, publicity for the chapter or for the profession, etc.)*

* We have had between 60-70 registrants sign up for each Career Connections Webinar.
* We are conducting Level 1 and Level 3 evaluations on the Career Connections Webinars, via Survey Monkey, LinkedIn, and Adobe Connect. Specific answers to the following survey questions include the following:

*What have you found most valuable about the Career Connections Discussion/Webinars?*

“I've learned new tips and information from each group discussion that have been very helpful, such as I have never heard of glassdoor.com before. I've been able to use this to review companies to determine if I want to apply to a job there.“

“The connections and hearing what other people are doing to handle job search issues. It has also given me insight into what other people are having difficulties with in regards to finding a job.”

“The different topics as well as the discussions.”

*What have you been able to apply from these discussions to your job search?*

“I've updated my linkedin profile to make it more professional and have begun using some of the tips in our discussion of how to better utilize linkedin in the job search.”

“I haven't yet but I am strongly considering getting a LinkedIn Premium account to get more visibility. Someone has mentioned this in a previous call and has had a very good experience with it.”

“Networking and interview skills.”

*Please add any other comments about Career Connections here*

“I think this is a great new service the chapter is offering its members. I've enjoyed participating in the discussions. I think it is great that we have a group on linkedin and that these meetings are virtual. It might be good to try and schedule an in-person meeting one month so individuals can put names with faces and make more of a personal connection with group members. If you like my idea above on the feedback session maybe that could potentially be an in-person meeting.”

“I think some workshops on how to conduct and/or act in a training position/ISD focused job interview would be great! There seemed to be a lot of interest in that topic a few meetings ago. I'd also like to see more resources available on the Career Services website, such as a list of recruiters/recruiting companies that work with placing training personnel.”

“I think this is a valuable service for job seekers. I have learned a lot from listening to others and their experiences. It's like a job seeker support group! Thanks again for offering this to us!”

* We have had very active participation during Career Connections Discussions, and multiple requests for recordings of the Career Connections Discussions.
* One Career Services volunteer found a new position as a direct result of the research she was conducting on behalf of the Chapter (we ‘advertised’ for volunteers to help research job posting site best practices—as well as with our overall Career Services strategy—who were looking for new job opportunities and who wanted to help the Chapter at the same time).
* It is still early to include additional outcomes (such as numbers of possible new members and how employers have benefitted)—but we would be happy to provide an update later this year!

**Lessons Learned:** *(Hints and tips for other Chapters who may be considering a similar effort)*

* Initially, after deciding to improve our Career Services offerings, we spent too much time focusing on our job posting service (conducting research on job board best practices). The reality is that few people find jobs via posting services. Far more find new positions (the most common way new jobs are found) through networking. We recommend focusing on a Career Services program that connects members and local employers on a more personal level.
* Lining up Career Connections Webinar/discussion topics in advance is helpful for planning, and in advertising the sessions.
* At meetings and events, always offer the opportunity for those seeking jobs (and those looking for employees) to introduce themselves—this is a quick, simple win!
* Many job seekers want to remain anonymous. We encourage participants to use first names only (unless they want to use first and last names) during Webinars. Also, we have many participants who dial in to our Webinars from a cubicle. They don’t have the privacy to speak freely about their job search—instead they use the Chat feature in Adobe Connect to participate.

**Please list the specific ASTD chapter resources that helped guide you in the process of completing this best practice (e.g. people, documents, policies, by-laws, etc):**

* Andrea Evans, President of the Metro DC ASTD Chapter, and Kathy Reiffenstein, Vice President of Membership—both have been very helpful in providing feedback on proposed initiatives, and in being open to trying new things!
* Mary Lynn Billittari, Director of Membership Outreach—I have worked closely with Mary Lynn on membership outreach events (such as networking happy hours) to ensure we can include a Career Services component on the agenda.
* Charlotte McKenzie, Eve Princler, and Kathy Zygula— Career Services volunteers who were initially recruited to help with research on the job posting site, and have stuck around and provided support in reviewing marketing documents and in brainstorming additional Career Services outreach ideas.
* National ASTD’s Career Development Community of Practice is a great resource.

**How did you become familiar with the Sharing Our Success (SOS) program?**

* Saw or heard of SOS from Twitter
* Saw or heard of SOS from Facebook
* Saw or heard of SOS from another Chapter Leader
* Saw or heard of SOS from LinkedIn Chapter Leaders group
* Saw or heard of SOS on an area call with a NAC representative
* Found SOS on ASTD National website
* Other (Chapter Leader’s Day at ASTD ICE)

***Please email completed forms to*** [***SOS@astd.org***](mailto:SOS@astd.org) ***along with any supporting documents.***