

2009 SOS Submission: Central Iowa Volunteer Management



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Chapter Name: Central Iowa
Chapter ID: CH6013
Chapter Location: Midwest
Chapter Membership Size: Medium (101-300)

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Description of Effort: The Networking committee has gone from no volunteers to 9 volunteers in less than 1 year. I successfully was able to build a committee from the ground up and managed the volunteers. This effort and submission is Best Increase membership engagement through volunteerism. The Networking function went from no volunteers to 9 volunteers within 1 year. I was able to successfully build a committee from ground zero, to a group of members who wanted to get actively involved in the organization. Through this endeavor, I was also able to gain professional development experience by learning to manage and lead a group of volunteers. This year at our annual board meeting, I presented Best Practices – Volunteer Management presentation and shared with my peers.

Need Addressed: The Networking committee has gone from no volunteers to 9 volunteers in less than 1 year. I successfully was able to build a committee from the ground. The main need was to seek out members to get involved with the Networking committee and become involved with the organization through volunteering. The outcome was that members did want to get involved, they wanted to be included, and enjoyed being part of the process by providing ideas and suggestions for topics, speakers and locations for our monthly chapter meetings.

Does this effort align with your chapter mission? Yes

Does this effort align with ASTD's mission? Yes

Target Audience: Board Leaders and Committee Members

Costs/Resource Use: No cost involved, only time from board member to implement and initiate

How did you implement: In 2007 and 2008 there was only 1 volunteer on the Networking committee. In July 2008 I became the co-VP of Networking, and made a goal to get at least 2 volunteers involved with the committee. In the fall of 2008, I contacted our Membership VP and asked for a listing of all members who indicated on their application an interest to volunteer. The VP of Membership sent me list of those individuals along with their contact information. I contacted each person individually by phone or email asking if they would be interested in being part of the Networking Committee. Seven accepted and I held several telephone conference meetings to plan 2009 monthly chapter meetings before the end of the year. In 2009, our chapter removed the second page portion of our new membership application for various reasons (GO Green), so most of my recruiting for volunteers for the 2010 season was accomplished by referrals, personal networking at ASTD events, and recommendations from other board leaders. The 2010 Networking Committee currently has 9 committee members. Each committee member has specific tasks they determined and wanted to do for the organization. An example is one committee member handles our chapter meeting greeter volunteers, another manages most of all of our communication needs, and another became a Logistics Director for our Central Iowa Chapter board needs.

What were the Outcomes: With the increased committee members we were able to accomplish more in less time. The committee was able to secure different locations for our monthly chapter meetings, determine reevaluated and requested topics based on previous survey results, and secure speakers (local and national). The other phenomenon was the success of our monthly chapter meeting. Our 2009 chapter meeting attendance increased significantly. Currently we are having a 43% increase in attendance, this is without counting our December 2009 meeting numbers.

Lessons Learned: In numbers come strength, in strength comes precision. Lessons to share: 1) effective goal setting; 2) collaborate with other teams; 3) make personal contact with members with potential committee members; 4) hold virtual meetings for greater flexibility for committee members to attend more frequently; 5) create and send an agenda prior to committee meetings; 6) honor the agenda by following it and keeping to the time scheduled; 7) send meeting notes and tasks out immediately afterwards and follow up as needed; and finally 8) discover each committee member's passion and letting them lead those efforts using their strengths, skills, and desires. By seeking out members, making a personal connection, and personally inviting someone to be part of something will strengthen your chapter member base simply from word of mouth. One lesson learned immediately was to get to know the strengths, skills and desire of each committee member to be able to align each of them in tasks that will engage and excite them. Providing roles within the committee is extremely beneficial and helpful. This keeps the committee on track, focused and each person feels they can contribute as much or as little as they want. Advice for board leaders is to attend as many ASTD events as you can throughout the year, make yourself known to others, and simply meet new people and "Just Ask" if they would be interested in volunteering sometime.