



Chapter Connection

Chapter Planning for 2017

By: Charlie Sodano, Ph.D.

Many of us start out the new year with a personal list of “resolutions.” These often include actions and practices we propose to improve ourselves, like eating healthier or learning something new. January is viewed as an ideal time to initiate a fresh start with the hope that our lives will become better.

Many ARMA chapters also do some January planning to launch initiatives that will benefit or inspire their members and improve relationships. A few Pacific Region chapters have shared their 2017 plans ([Arizona](#) and [Silver State](#)), which identify their key areas of focus. Most concern approaches for better engaging members and improving partnerships. Following are suggestions for areas where your chapter may want to focus.

Improving Communications

Reach out to membership via surveys, e-mail, or town hall-type meetings. For the most part, we have sporadic interactions with our ARMA chapter colleagues and often miss key changes in their interests and desires that could affect chapter programming. Consider asking members:

- What’s new with your job or personal life?
- Do you spend a lot of time commuting? Does this make meeting attendance difficult?
- Does your job have new responsibilities that require some training?

The better you communicate with your members, the more you will learn about what they need and how to provide it.

Examine your website and associated services. Is your website easy to view on smartphones and other mobile devices? If not, consider reducing the clutter so the important information is easier to find and access. Perhaps the most important item provides details about upcoming events. Whatever it is, that information should be right on the home page, not a click or two away.

Acknowledging, Recognizing, and Rewarding Members

Welcome new members with a certificate and perhaps a small gift. Acknowledge them on the chapter website and perhaps via a group e-mail. These gestures will show the chapter’s appreciation for them joining.

The same kind of rewards should be given to any member who participates in planning and organizing a chapter activity, whether they are part of the board of directors or not. This will encourage future participation in chapter activities. It’s a small price to pay.

Partnering with Other Organizations



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Contact other professional organizations who are active in your area – even those that are focused on information management. Attend one of their events, if possible, and include them on your mailing lists. This could provide multiple benefits, including potential event speakers, member prospects, meeting attendees, and diverse perspectives on RIM issues

Local charities could also be great partners for your chapter. In donating to their causes, you could get additional contacts who will spread the word about your chapter's benefits and activities.

Reassessing Chapter Meeting Plans

Many chapters plan their chapter meeting programs in August each year. Sometimes, topics of current interest in August will fade after six months, and others will become “hot.” January is an excellent time to tune chapter programming for the rest of the year to match it to the changing needs and desires of your members and to take advantage of opportunities to schedule an exciting speaker you have discovered or who has become available since the programming was planned in August.