



Chapter Connection

Importance of Board Leadership

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“It doesn’t matter if you try and try and try again, and fail. It does matter if you try and fail, and fail to try again.”

Charles Kettering

Serving on a chapter board can be both a rewarding and challenging experience. It offers new members and emerging RIM/IG leaders an opportunity to build their management and organizational skills and expand their professional network. However, it is not always sunshine and gumdrops.

Many new board leaders come to their first chapter board meeting with new and fresh ideas only to be met with resistance from veteran leaders. Challenges with locating speakers, increasing meeting attendance, or engaging members can sometimes drain the energy and excitement out of serving. When this happens, consider employing these strategies to help boost your board’s energy.

Change Your Board’s Business Model

As the adage goes, “Insanity is doing something over, over and over again and expecting a different result.” The cornerstone of leadership is adaptability; being a visionary and innovative board requires willingness to accept change.

Successful chapter boards strive to align themselves with what their current and prospective members value. They are not satisfied with the status quo, but have – and encourage – a “think big” mentality.

Just as businesses that are unwilling to adapt often fail, so do chapters. Willingness to adapt means accepting change, which doesn’t happen overnight; it must be cultivated. Encourage board and chapter members to share their ideas and be willing to entertain them.

Reward Chapter Leadership

Serving on a chapter board is a commitment. It’s a commitment of your time and creative energy, but most importantly, it’s a commitment to OUR profession. You do more than just plan a chapter meeting, a spring seminar, or a charity event; you are helping educate, coach, and establish connections within our professional community.

Chapters that are challenged in finding volunteer leaders should consider incentivizing people to serve: waive chapter meeting fees; give reimbursements toward certifications or certificates; provide support to attend the Region Leadership conference. Create a document about the benefits of being a leader that can be used to convince organizations to allow employee participation and to encourage people to become members.

Market to Millennials



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With an aging membership demographic, it is important to consider how to attract students and young professionals, not only as members, but as chapter leaders. Focus recruiting messages on how volunteering will help potential members in these four areas:

1. *Networking.* Chapter activities provide opportunities to create and build new personal and professional connections.
2. *Getting Education.* Getting access to and taking advantage of the chapter's professional resources and education programs enable professional development and build a foundation for career growth. In today's social media era, millennials want to establish their brand, so promote how becoming chapter leaders can help them develop their brand.
3. *Learning Skills.* Most millennials want to be able to build on their knowledge, skills, and abilities; serving in chapter leadership roles offers great opportunities to add these to their resumes.
4. *Finding Jobs.* Every young professional wants gainful employment. Participating in and leading chapter groups and activities provide many opportunities to build leadership skills, find mentors and mentees, and develop professional relationships and references.

Dust off Your Failures

When embracing change, patience is essential. We tend to expect instantaneous results when we try new ideas. When we don't see the bountiful gains after one or two attempts, we declare failure and revert to our old ways. Alas, mountains do not rise overnight! New ideas take time to mature and chapter leaders must be willing to nurture changes in strategy. Take a moment to reevaluate old tactics and consider adjusting your approach. Remember, failure is just an opportunity.