



The Small Chapter Guide:

5 Steps To

BOOST EVENT ATTENDANCE

AT LOCAL ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS AND HOW IT
DIRECTLY AFFECTS REVENUES & RECRUITING



WHY SHOULD YOU FOCUS SO MUCH ATTENTION ON BOOSTING MEETING ATTENDANCE?

Activity is the lifeblood of a chapter, especially smaller ones. If people attend events they come because they value the chapter. They value the experience chapter events provide, and the associations they can have through the chapter. Without regular attendance, your chapter members will begin to disassociate themselves with the organization. If they don't attend events, they will not get the desired value they hoped for when they enrolled as a member. They won't strengthen the relationships.



HIGH ATTENDANCE RATES LEAD TO A ROBUST, FINANCIALLY STABLE, AND HEALTHY CHAPTER, EVEN WITH LESS THAN 100 MEMBERS

Strong attendance is the main indicator that associations are successfully engaging with their membership. An event is the most visible way that leaders, as well as members, can gauge the strength of the chapter. It is one of the best ways to recruit new members. Boosting meeting attendance is the fastest way to increase revenue to the association while increasing membership retention and value.

Small Chapters Need to Find Effective Ways to Boost Event Attendance – But Nearly **90% of Chapters NEVER Do It** – and They Suffer Dwindling Activity, Lower Revenues, and Slow Growth

YOU AS A CHAPTER LEADER CAN MAKE A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON CHAPTER ATTENDANCE

So, you are a volunteer leader or paid administrator of a small or growing chapter, and you are responsible for day-to-day operations, growth and stability. You know it is important to track and boost meeting attendance (but it's not an easy task).



DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOUR SITUATION?

Let's say that your local member-based organization or chapter has 80 members. The average event will have membership attendance of 20-25 people, with a handful of guests thrown in the mix. Of those attendees, you see the same people month after month; with few exceptions, usually the same people attend, and the same people miss each event. However, you

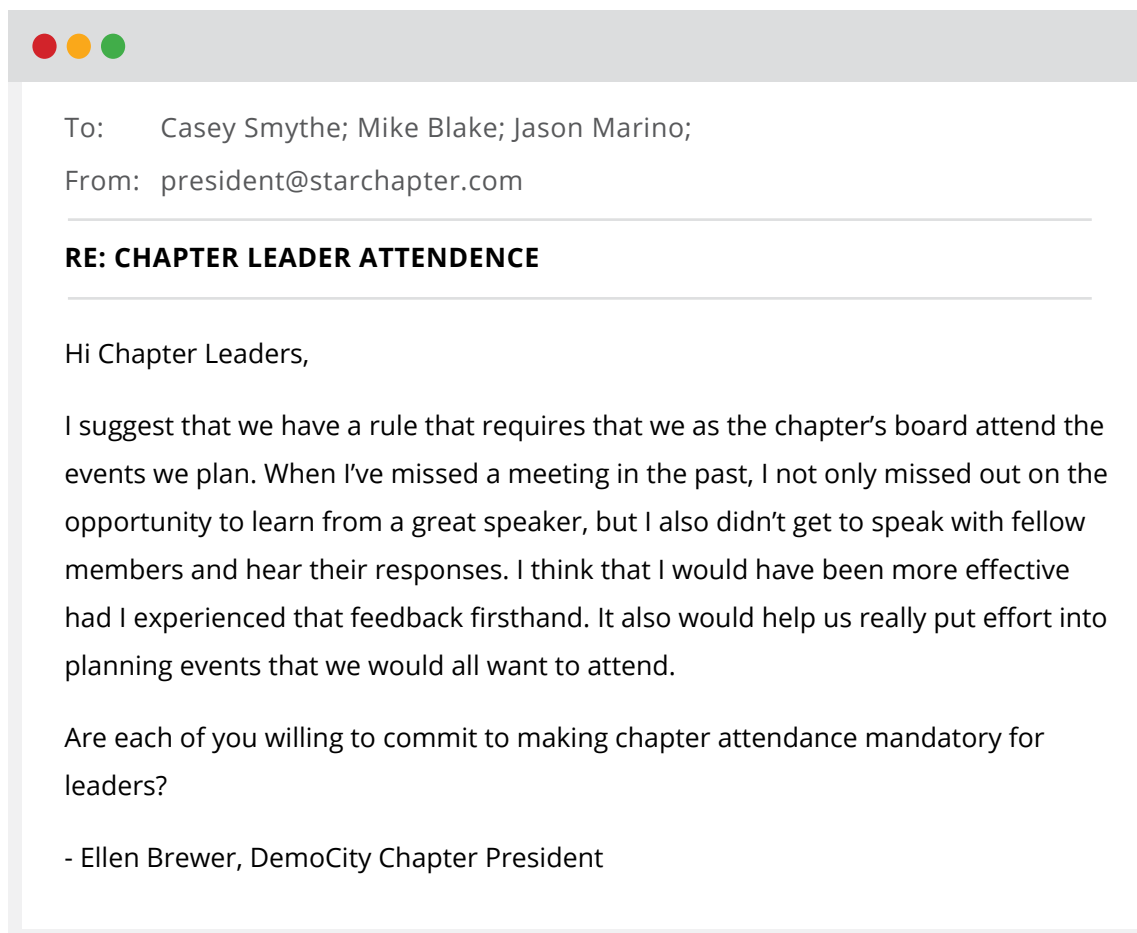
want to do something different. You are not satisfied just maintaining the status quo. The association's most engaged members are going to show up without any special effort from you. You know you can do better. But what should you do?

STEP 1

Make Attendance Mandatory For Chapter Leaders

Smaller chapters sometimes struggle with board participation. But when chapter leaders do not come to meetings that tells you something about the way they feel about the value of the events. When the board is required to attend meetings, they will usually put more thought into planning and carrying out the events. It will also empower them, help them experience the event, and allow them to interact with chapter members.

Try sending an email like this:



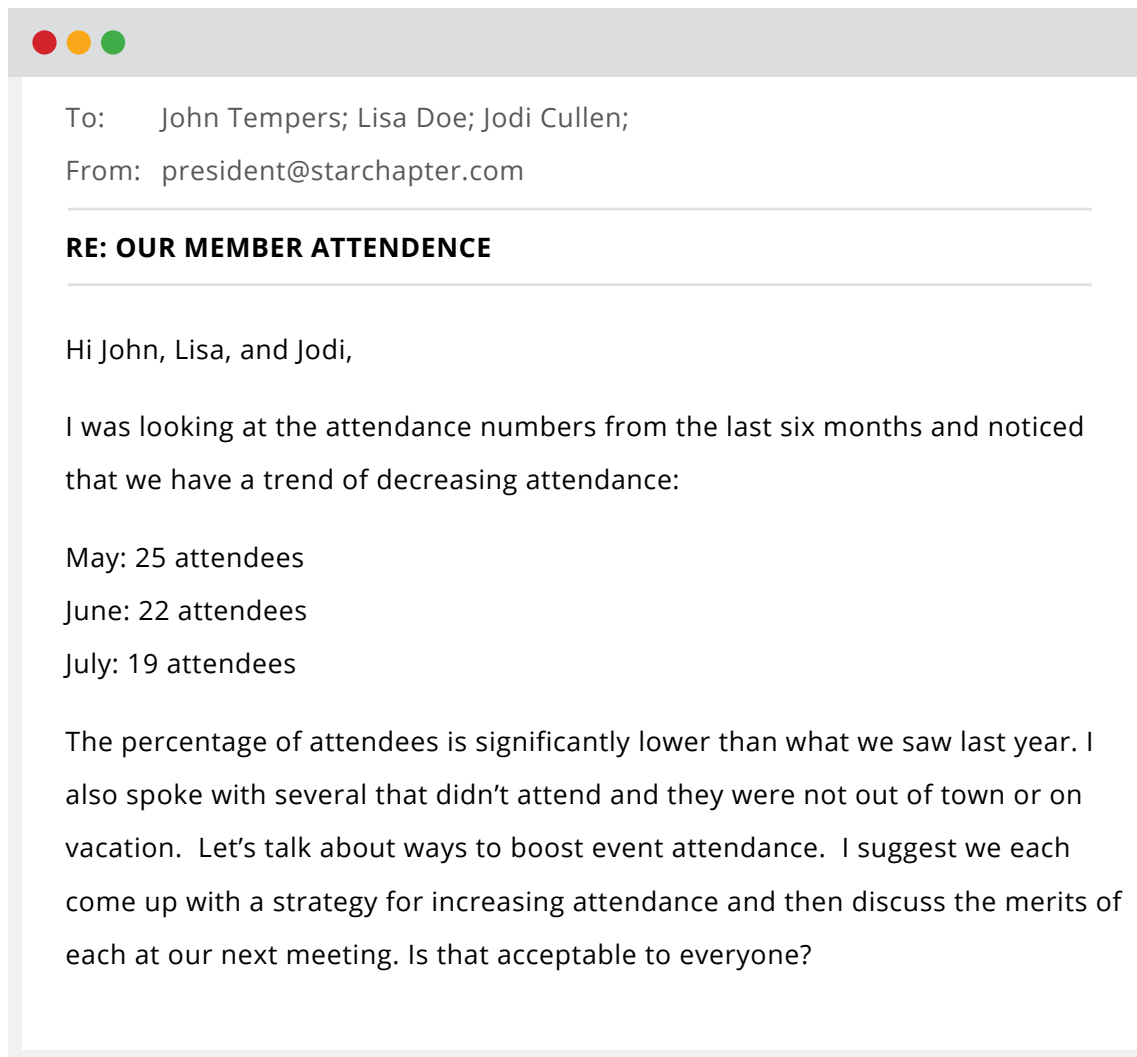
STEP 2

Make Meeting Attendance A Priority Among Chapter Leaders

The first thing to do is raise awareness among your fellow chapter leaders. Help them understand that if you leave poor attendance unaddressed, the chapter will likely see membership decline. Attendance may appear stable for a while, but those dwindling numbers will have an adverse effect on your active, committed members. This is doubly significant with chapters under a 100 members.

When you have fewer active members, your revenue will decrease, leading to tighter budgets and hindering the quality and value of future meeting content. All of these factors can cause a downward spiral toward critical failure. The chapter will suffer.

Consider sending a message like this:

A screenshot of an email message template. At the top left, there are three colored circles (red, yellow, green) representing window control buttons. The email content is as follows:

To: John Tempers; Lisa Doe; Jodi Cullen;
From: president@starchapter.com

RE: OUR MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Hi John, Lisa, and Jodi,

I was looking at the attendance numbers from the last six months and noticed that we have a trend of decreasing attendance:

May: 25 attendees
June: 22 attendees
July: 19 attendees

The percentage of attendees is significantly lower than what we saw last year. I also spoke with several that didn't attend and they were not out of town or on vacation. Let's talk about ways to boost event attendance. I suggest we each come up with a strategy for increasing attendance and then discuss the merits of each at our next meeting. Is that acceptable to everyone?

STEP 3

Tighten Up Communication

This is the most basic but often overlooked step: chapters simply don't have their members' current contact information. To attend an event, a member needs to hear about events so that they can plan to attend. Double-check your records and ensure that you have valid email and phone contact information. With a smaller member list, this should be easily implemented.

STEP 4

Put On "Must-See" Events

Don't make the mistake of decreasing budgets so much that events are no longer worth attending. Carefully plan an event so that you KNOW people will want to attend. Then, spend money on better invitations or blast out more invitations for each event. Some associations will even fall into the trap of reducing the number of events per year because they believe that people don't attend because the meetings occur too often. This is seldom the case; usually it is the quality of the event that leads to a lack of attendance.



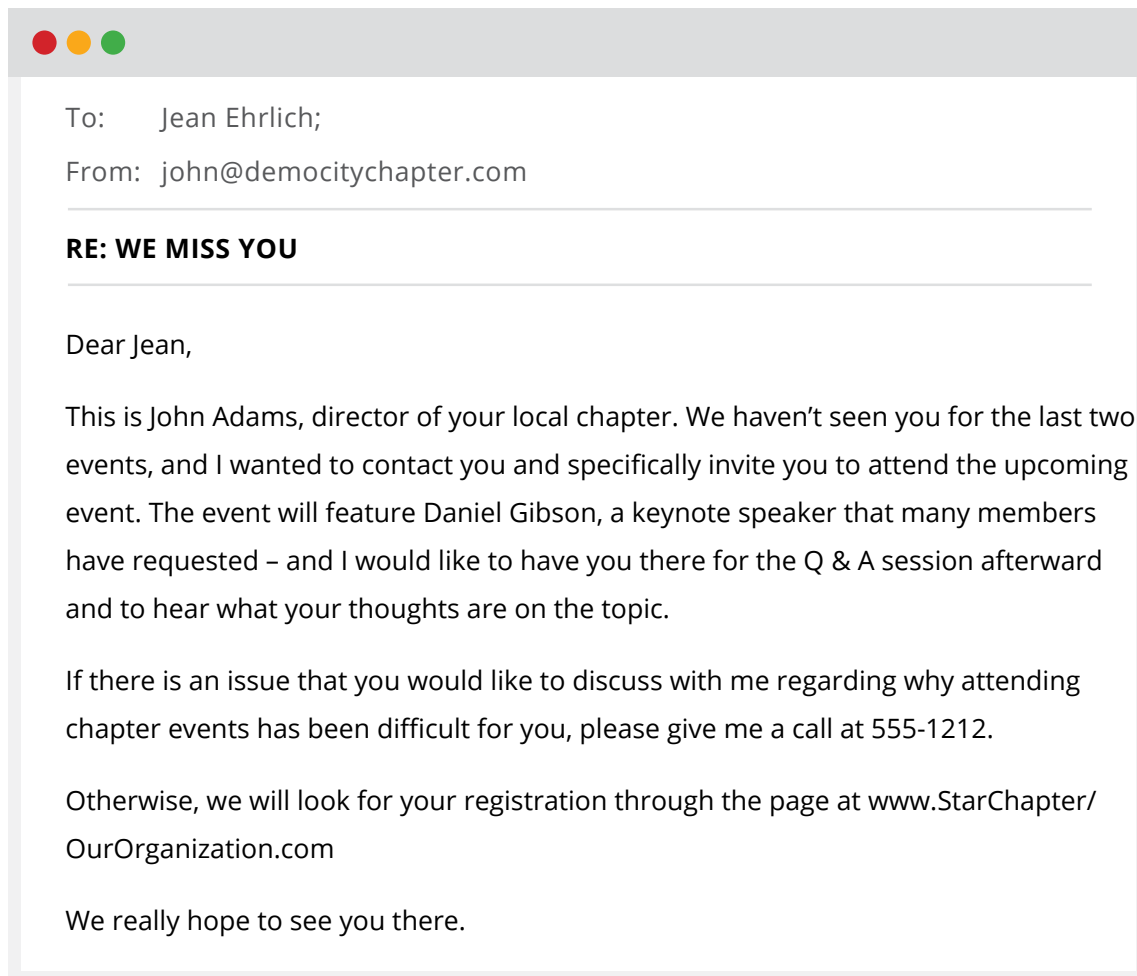
STEP 5

Reach Out Personally to Each Non-Participating Member and Invite Them to Come Back

Pull a report of not just the members who have attended meetings, but also the members who have NOT attended meetings in any given date range.

Once you identify them, you or the membership chair or administrator must send specifically targeted emails directly to these members who are not engaged and attending meetings.

For example:

A screenshot of an email message displayed in a window. The window has a grey title bar with three colored circles (red, yellow, green) on the left. The email content is as follows:

To: Jean Ehrlich;
From: john@democitychapter.com

RE: WE MISS YOU

Dear Jean,

This is John Adams, director of your local chapter. We haven't seen you for the last two events, and I wanted to contact you and specifically invite you to attend the upcoming event. The event will feature Daniel Gibson, a keynote speaker that many members have requested – and I would like to have you there for the Q & A session afterward and to hear what your thoughts are on the topic.

If there is an issue that you would like to discuss with me regarding why attending chapter events has been difficult for you, please give me a call at 555-1212.

Otherwise, we will look for your registration through the page at www.StarChapter/OurOrganization.com

We really hope to see you there.

MAGNIFY THE IMPACT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

The power of an individual message directly from a chapter officer asking that individual to come, and communicating why they may benefit from this specific event is a powerful motivator to get people to make arrangements in their schedule and show up at the next event.

Make sure that the message is sincere, and specifically mention that you value their membership.

When you make the effort to engage active and inactive members with this five step program, and emphasize personal contact from you, as a chapter leader, you will see an increase in attendance, and that will carry over to higher revenues, improved growth, and a healthier, thriving chapter.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

Contact StarChapter and find out how we can make it easy for you to manage all your **attendance records, payments, communications, and scheduling**, all in one easy to use online software.



When your volunteers are more productive they tend to have more enthusiasm for what they are doing. That makes them feel better about contributing their time to the chapter. When they have more enthusiasm, they have better ideas and put forth more energy for the chapter benefit. Members pick up on this enthusiasm and the energy grows at events along with attendance and revenue.

1-866-775-3205 | sales@starchapter.com