

Back To The Board Basics, Getting Your Board Ready For Your Program Year



If your association chapter board is like most, summer is a quiet time. Why shouldn't you get some down time while your association chapter members are enjoying their summers? But, and we've talked about this before, we recommend association chapter boards do some administrative work during the summer to make the fall easier to manage. With no events to manage or programs to hold, summer is a great time to gear up for what's to come and be in a better place for the fall.



This “summer slide” is the same thing that parents, teachers and students experience. Think about what it's like the week before school starts. Teachers rush to pull together everything they need to support their students in the coming school year, including supplies and lesson plans. A few even realize they should have taken advantage of the downtime for some professional development. At the same time, parents have been thinking about what their kids have not been doing. Most haven't read, studied or done anything school related. When the kids return to school in September it can take a few weeks, or even longer, to get back to where they were the previous June.

What happens to teachers in the summer is a great analogy to what your association chapter board experiences during the summer. Rather than rushing to get ready for fall in that last week before the chapter programming starts back up, taking advantage of the summer downtime can help your board, and as a result, your members.

Here are a few things your board could do in the summer to improve and get “back to basics” to make for a better the chapter year.

3 Summer Back to Basics Ideas for Improving Your Association Chapter’s Fall

Since you’re asking your association chapter board members to give up some of their summer downtime, what sorts of things can you ask them to do when they have time? Start by creating a chapter board checklist and asking board members what they would like to be responsible for, so that you’re not involving the whole board unless necessary.

Get your supplies ready. What could you purchase over the summer to help your board (i.e. the teachers) improve how your chapter runs and what your members (i.e. the students) experience? Summer is a good time for an association chapter audit. It might be time for new tablecloths for your registration table and/or badge holders, stickers and markers for your chapter networking events. Maybe now is the time to buy an iPad, so your volunteers don’t have to check in people by hand on a spreadsheet. Running low on chapter swag or sponsor materials? Or maybe you need a new projector. You can improve how things run during the chapter year by using the summer to get a sense of what you’re missing, what’s worn out and what needs to be replaced.

Give the board some homework. Like any great teacher, your board members have probably been setting aside articles and activities that they thought could be useful for the board, because who has time to read anything extra during the chapter year? Ask your board members to share what they have and create a workbook – online or printed – with those items. Add a narrative with the goals of the workbook. Should they have it read by the time the chapter year starts back up? Or should they be ready to come together later in the summer to discuss what they’ve read and come up with a plan to implement some of it? A workbook can be a useful way to get board members to think about what the chapter needs to operate more smoothly.

Get together for some summer school. Summer is a great time for an association chapter board meeting. Discuss the workbook and other topics of importance. Do some planning and set some strategies for the fall chapter session. For a summer meeting to be valuable to everyone who attends, get your board members to help you organize it. Ask them what a successful retreat would look like. Where should you hold it – in person or virtually? What do they want to discuss? Ask for their input on the agenda and increase the likelihood it will include topics that are relevant and important to them. Summer Board School Activities Drive Chapter Success



Be sure to take off some time this summer – the board deserves it. But doing a few things while it’s quiet can have a big impact on your chapter in the fall. Taking advantage of the time you’re not being bombarded by holding events and meeting members’ needs in the moment, can put your board and your chapter on track for a stellar school year.

