

Could A Chapter Association Recognition Day Help With Recruitment?



As association chapter members get older and retire and leave their chapters, more often these members aren't being replaced by new ones. We've spoken to boards that say that as this happens more often, they are struggling to keep their association chapter identity and their industry alive and relevant. They attribute this downturn to a lack of younger members, awareness and overall interest.



Younger individuals aren't joining association chapters in the numbers they used to. Many high school and college students aren't proactively looking into careers and industries that are available to them after graduation. Instead, they're waiting for career information and jobs to come to them.

How about giving your chapter some much needed visibility with an Association Day, to increase awareness, relevance and interest in your chapter to younger people? You could do this while simultaneously highlighting your industry and all the benefits of a career in it and celebrating the talented, hard-working members of your organization.

Ideas for Holding a Chapter Association Day

Whether a single day, an entire week, or something in between, create a program that incorporates activities that give positive coverage and exposure to your industry and the careers in it. To give

people a full picture of what it means to work in your industry, showcase different jobs and any relevant training and certifications as well as any other requirements that are needed. And don't forget to show how joining your association chapter is critical to success in your industry, with all the connections your members have to local companies that hire for these jobs.

Here are some ideas for events:

- **Speak at a high school or college.** Many younger individuals aren't aware of the different industries and careers that are available to them. Ask a member to speak, and take questions, about what it means to work in your industry.
- **Bring a student to work for a shadow day.** Ask members of your chapter to open their offices to a student for a day, to explore the different jobs and careers paths in your industry. Include hands on activities if possible
- **Hold a career fair.** Your members and sponsors probably have positions that could be filled by young people new in their careers or those who could be trained for a specific role. Hold a career fair that includes speakers that talk about your industry and the different roles and staff booths with those who have open positions.
- **Highlight jobs and careers through member testimonials.** In meetings, online and in your social media, share what members love about what they do, and how your chapter has helped them. For more visibility, create a hashtag to use with these on your social media and in your board members' email signatures (something like #lovemy ----career).
- **Hold happy hours and roundtable discussions.** Bring students together with your more experienced members for small roundtable discussions and networking. You may want to split these into groups by age, as high schoolers and college students/college graduates may be looking for different information.
- **Ask for an association day proclamation from your local or state government.** It doesn't cost anything and all you need to do is make a request. Then, for added visibility, share the proclamation document at an event and on your website.
- **Go to capitol hill (or your local government) for an advocacy day.** Advocacy days help build awareness and support of your industry. Ask local high school and/or college students to join you so they get a sense of how your chapter impacts change in your industry.



Offer a Membership Discount

It's not enough to just talk about your industry and hope enough people like what they hear and join. Young people love a good prize, so how else can you entice them? Sure, swag is great, but it might not get you new members; they'll just be happy for the swag. Instead, consider a discount on membership for high school and/or college students, or recent college graduates who join. (If you don't have a membership category for those age groups, it's time to create one.)

An association day doesn't need to cost a fortune.

You don't need to spend a lot of money to make your chapter's association day or week happen. There are a lot of creative ways volunteers from your chapter can improve the awareness of your organization and/or your industry with local high schools and colleges without breaking the bank.

An awareness event isn't something that needs to be left to your national organization. Your local association chapter knows your local market and industry. well. Hold your own events that will have the young people in your area connecting with you and asking to join.



