

# Hold Cross-Industry Meetings To Expand Your Members' Perspective



You may think that all of your association chapter programming needs to come from within your own chapter. And you may be doing a great job providing what members of your association chapter are looking for, in terms of website resources, events, conferences, etc.



But think about all about other association chapter and professional organizations. We'd bet that they probably think the same thing about their organization – they have access to all the experts they need in house.

That could be true. Or maybe there's another way to look at the organizations in your area, or for that matter, organizations almost anywhere. There is no reason to see other association chapter organizations as competitors; there are plenty of ways to work together.

Let's use the example of organizations in residential construction, plumbing, electric and interior design. These are all industries that are adjacent to each other. One of the most obvious things they have in common is that they are all working, sometimes they're just all working on the same property at different times, sometimes they have to make joint decisions and sometimes they happen to be at a property at the same time. Interior designers and carpenters work together, determining things like the shape and or design of a cabinet door and the height of that cabinet. And they often work with

plumbers and electricians and carpenters to figure out the design of, for example, a kitchen renovation. Their goal is to create what their homeowner wants.

Next, think about some other industries that aren't directly connected to residential construction, like real estate organizations and association chapters for mortgage brokers. You might not see an immediate connection, but again, think about their customer base. They are all working with the same people.

Wouldn't it make sense then, that they should find ways to work together to improve how they interact with those customers and each other?

Your members are your priority – you're hyper-focused on keeping them engaged and giving them what they need to be happy and grow. Knowing there could be a lot of overlap between organizations, in adjacent industries or industries further out, it would make sense for like-minded organizations to connect and find ways to collaborate and support each other.

### **Ways to partner across industries for the benefit of all members**

Association chapters in different industries can easily work together and more easily give their members what they're looking for. Here are three easy ways organizations can benefit from these sorts of cross-industry partnerships.

- **Resource sharing.** Does your association chapter have a resource library filled with webinars and other educational materials that could be helpful to a chapter in another industry? Offer to share them and see what that chapter can offer in return that would be useful and relevant to your members. There is no reason for you to create your educational materials from scratch if another organization has a program your members would find useful.
- **Joint events.** Are you looking to bring in a speaker or thinking about offering a unique hands-on experience? And at the same time are you thinking about how much work it would be to make that event happen? This is a perfect opportunity to collaborate with an association chapter in a related industry. They may have just the people you're looking for, in terms of subject matter experts and volunteers.



- **Joint programs.** Are there programs that you would like to hold that are longer-term, like a speaker series or other educational series? Or have you thought about a series of unique hands-on learning experiences? Instead of planning and executing the whole thing yourselves and struggling to find the ideas and the people to make them happen, look for help from other association chapters, to get the volunteers you need more easily and expand your programming. Bring together a planning committee with people from multiple organizations, and all of a sudden you can easily come up with five ideas instead of three and have the people you need to execute on all of them.

### **Benefits of cross-industry partnerships**

Successful partnerships across industries that you may think have nothing to do with each other can also provide you with benefits you may never have thought of. By leveraging the resources of the organizations and sharing the combined knowledge, you can:

- More easily connect people in different organizations for networking and growth
- Develop relationships in new areas
- Expand your membership base with members you may never have thought of
- Improve member effectiveness, by sparking innovation and unlocking new opportunities
- Improve chapter efficiency with increased alignment and accelerated success.

And you can do it all while reducing the individual financial burden of each individual chapter. You'll do more and actually spend less, as you're splitting the costs between all the participating chapters.

Chapters often get too narrowly focused on their own industry, while at the same time they're talking about how they want to be able to offer X, Y and Z to members. By actively interacting with other industries, and industries you may think you really have no connection to, you and your members can get better perspectives, which will ultimately lead to better results for everyone.

