

How To Highlight Your Industry And Engage Younger Members: A conversation With Madie Kiser, President, CPCU Charlotte



As your association chapter members continue to age — the average age is 55 —and you look for new members, does it seem like the younger people you’re trying to engage (who might have easily joined your chapter a decade ago) seem more focused on social media fame than on “traditional” careers? We know we’re being cheeky here, but you get what we’re saying. Your members are leaving and it’s not as easy to grow as it used to be.



We talked in an earlier post about making sure your chapter remains relevant to younger people and gave you some ways to do that, including holding events like chapter days or even entire weeks devoted to sharing your industry and your chapter organization with the community.

At a high level, this could include:

- Exploring the intricacies of your industry, including any relevant training, certifications and other requirements
- Highlighting jobs, careers and career progressions
- Showing how membership in your association chapter is important to success in your industry.

A Chapter Career Day Success: The Institutes® CPCU Society, Charlotte chapter

Recently we spoke to Madie Kiser, president of The Institutes CPCU Society, Charlotte chapter (CPCU Charlotte) about the chapter's annual CPCU Insurance Day. This career day helps the chapter broaden young peoples' knowledge of the insurance industry, engages local young people in new and creative ways and gets them to think early about chapter membership.

What is CPCU Insurance Day?

Insurance forums are held throughout Charlotte. We bring in great insurance speakers on relevant topics including regulatory, legislative, cyber, AI, flood, etc., as well as professional development.

How do students get to attend?

We have partnerships with Appalachian State University and University of North Carolina. The directors of the insurance programs can select eight to 10 students to send. We want to introduce them [the students] to all the ways the insurance world is changing and the opportunities that are available to them. There is more than just policy work and includes marketing and office management. We want to get those options in front of them as they are getting started in their careers.

How did these school partnerships start?

We have a lot of board members that are alumni. They help by using their connections to the universities. We also provide scholarships and stipends for books for the students, so it is mutually beneficial.

Do you have any other initiatives to involve more students and young professionals?

We have a student shadow day in the fall where students shadow members at their offices. We also partner with the Charlotte chapter of YRP (Young Risk Professionals). We recently held a pickleball tournament that had 25 teams and sold out within 48 hours. It was a great success with a lot of interest in membership.

5 Ways to Promote your Chapter's "Day"

Unlike in the movie Field of Dreams, "build it and they will come" doesn't work well, whether for a career fair or a related chapter event. Promoting and marketing your event is critical to getting the level of attendance you want. Here are a few marketing and promotion ideas that can help bring the people you're looking for to your event.



1. **Mention it at chapter events.** Tap into your current members – they know your chapter and your industry. Ask them who they think could be a good fit and ask them to invite them. Get the person’s contact information, so you can follow up with a customized invitation. To make it easier for members to remember the messaging you want them to share, provide talking points.

2. **Contact career counselors and career centers at high schools, community college and four-year colleges.** They’re always looking for ways to get students thinking about new careers and industries and engaged in the workforce early. Create a flyer with questions and answers and have chapter materials that counselors can share with students who may be at different places in their lives, to help them understand your industry and your chapter.

3. **Share on social media channels and on your website.** Younger individuals get most of their information online, so highlight your event where there’s a better chance they’ll see it. Link social media posts to a landing page with more information on your website and have a link on that page to register. As member companies and sponsors sign up to participate, update your website with their logos.

4. **Send it out by email.** This is where segmenting emails messages for different groups will be helpful. Send messages to your members, member guests and sponsors. And don’t forget email reminders to those who have registered to attend.

5. **Try a contest.** Who doesn’t love free stuff? Contests can work well with members of your chapter as well as those you want to attend. Offer a prize for members who have the most non-members register to attend, like free swag or another incentive, like VIP attendance at an event, and a different prize for new people who register to come and bring a friend or to have a one-on-one discussion with one of your board members at the event.

Don’t forget the benefits!

However you choose to market it, be sure to share the “why” behind attending. That could include things like:

- **Insight into a new industry.** Learn about a new industry and careers they might not be aware of.
- **Resume review and interview experience.** Get experience interviewing and feedback about their resume and experience from the people who are looking.



- **Connections.** Meet new people, including those in the industry and get the chance to expand their network.
- **Job opportunities.** Find out about new jobs from companies that are actively recruiting.

The Importance of Continued Awareness

If your chapter is struggling to grow its membership and replace members who leave, it's critical to actively engage with groups of people who might not be aware of your industry and the importance of your chapter in that industry. Look inside and outside your chapter for those people who could fit the bill.

