

Winning The Season: How Your Chapter Board Can Learn From The Super Bowl



The Super Bowl captures people’s attention; that attention goes far beyond die-hard football fans. For many, the Super Bowl is the biggest event of the year. Even if you don’t follow football, the lessons behind the “big game” are universal.



The teams that make it to the Super Bowl do it with preparation, teamwork and strategy and a shared commitment to winning as a team. The Super Bowl champion doesn’t succeed because of one person. They win because everyone—from leaders to those executing the plays to those providing behind-the-scenes support—works together and their commitment to the team and to each other continues season after season.

These principles can be applied to association chapter boards and chapter operations. Successful boards work throughout the year to deliver value, engage members and move chapters forward, and each role on a chapter board and across the chapter adds critical momentum.

The “big game” mentality

Football teams spend months training, reviewing strategy, adjusting plays and learning from losses, injuries and other setbacks to better prepare for challenges, adapt to change, and learn to trust each other.

Boards operate in much the same way. Your season is your chapter year. Success doesn't come from one great event or a single well-received meeting, but through those who play a role. It comes from consistent planning, clear communication and a shared commitment to members and their industry. Understanding how individual board roles connect to chapter success can help volunteer leaders stay aligned, focused and energized.

Chapter President: The Head Coach

Vision, Strategy, and Play Calling

Winning Super Bowl teams have strong leadership and a clear game plan. Compare the chapter president to a team's head coach—setting direction, defining priorities, and keeping the board focused on what matters most. Chapter presidents' responsibilities include:

- Setting the tone for the chapter year
- Defining strategy and priorities aligned with chapter goals
- Motivating and uniting the board around a shared vision
- Making tough decisions to overcome challenges

Like a coach, chapter presidents don't execute every chapter activity; they plan and offer advice and guidance, while ensuring everyone understands the plan and is ready to make it a reality.

Membership Chair: The Offensive Coordinator

Drives Growth and Engagement

In football, the offense drives the ball down the field to score. In association chapters, membership is the offense. The membership chair designs and executes the strategies that grow chapter membership and keep members engaged by:

- Developing new initiatives
- Communicating values clearly
- Tracking key metrics like renewals, new members, and participation
- Adjusting tactics when necessary

Without a strong offense, even the best team struggles to win. Without a membership chair, most boards would have trouble keeping their chapters moving forward.



Finance Vice President/Treasurer: the defensive coordinator

Protects Chapter Resources

Championship teams rely on a strong defense that protects what they've earned and prevents avoidable losses. Your treasurer or finance chair plays that role by safeguarding the chapter's financial health with responsibilities that include:

- Overseeing budgeting and financial controls
- Protecting against risk and overspending and managing compliance
- Ensuring sufficient chapter reserves
- Monitoring financial performance and long-term stability

Just like on a winning Super Bowl team, the right finance board member allows the chapter to meet its goals without the fear of missing critical financial resources.

Chapter Leader Running Point (VP, President-Elect or Key Chair): The Quarterback

Executes Under Pressure

Successful Super Bowl teams have strong quarterbacks calling plays and executing them in real time. In a chapter, this role—a vice president, president elect, chair or other key individual—leads an area of the chapter's overall strategy, like membership, events or finance. This can include:

- Recommending initiatives and leading brainstorming sessions
- Coordinating activities across the board as well as in their committee
- Keeping projects on schedule
- Responding quickly to changing conditions (venue changes, low turnout, shifting needs)
- Maintaining momentum during challenges

This role, of which there are typically several on a board, keeps the chapter moving forward and adjusting as needed throughout the chapter year.

Programs, events and education chairs: wide receivers & running backs

Delivers the Member Experience

These players drive the ball down the field. In a chapter, they help members see the chapter's value and understand how to take advantage of that value. Your program, events and educational leaders deliver the experiences that members remember, by:



- Planning and executing meetings, events and conferences
- Translating strategy into tangible member benefits
- Bringing creativity, energy and follow-through to every initiative
- Adapting chapter offerings based on feedback

These leaders run the plays that turn the preparation of others into visible wins.

Communications & marketing team: the offensive line

Blocks, Protects and Amplifies the Message

These players block the opposing team members trying to take down the quarterback before they throw the ball. Your communications and marketing team is your offensive line, creating the path to succeed, by:

- Ensuring clear, consistent messaging across chapter email, website and social channels
- Protecting the chapter's brand and voice
- Keeping members informed and connected
- Amplifying events, programs and membership initiatives

When chapter communications are strong, every other role has an easier time doing their job and doing it well.

Volunteers and one-off contributors: special teams

Small Plays, Big Impact

These small groups of players can be the difference between winning and losing a close game, executing kickoffs, punts, field goals and extra points. And in chapters, these are your short-term chapter volunteers (also known as "micro volunteers"), project task force members and event helpers, those you bring in for specific tasks. Most don't typically serve year round, but rather give your chapter the momentum it needs when it's needed, by:

- Completing key initiatives or short-term needs
- Supporting events, projects and transitions
- Bringing fresh energy and perspective



Turning small moments into meaningful wins, these are your members who can't commit to a full-time, regular role, but want to help.

Your Members: The Fans

The Reason You Play

Football teams play for their fans. And fans pick teams because there is something about that team they connect with. Your members are the reason your chapter exists; their energy keeps your board going and fuels your success. Their:

- Engagement and participation drive momentum
- Feedback helps leaders improve chapter strategy
- Excitement brings new members through word of mouth
- Positive experiences build long-term loyalty

When your members feel valued, informed and connected, everyone in the chapter wins.

Championship teams win together

Super Bowl champions succeed because everyone on the team understands their role and works in unison. The same is true for chapter leadership. As you continue your chapter season, challenge your board members to:

- Reflect on their role and impact on the board and in the chapter
- Communicate early and often
- Support one another across responsibilities
- Prepare, adapt and improve...together

When everyone plays their part, your chapter doesn't just survive the season—it wins it. Does your board (and your membership) see your chapter as a winning team? We'd love to learn what makes it successful. Share your thoughts below and maybe we'll feature your chapter in a future post.

