

# Microsites – Right For Your Association Chapter Or Do You Need More?



When your association chapter is part of a national organization, that parent association is hopefully providing you with all sorts of tools to help you run the chapter more effectively. Those tools can include things like standard processes and procedures, branding guidelines and legal and compliance support.



They may also provide direction around setting up your local chapter website, and they may have given you a microsite – a small website that’s part of the national website and sits alongside microsites for all their other chapters.

What sort of online presence is right for local association chapters? Should a chapter have a full website or just a microsite? Or would it be helpful to have both?

Here, you can find some guidance to help you decide what’s best for your chapter.

## **What’s a chapter microsite?**

An association chapter microsite is a web presence a chapter gets that is part of the parent organization's larger online ecosystem. It's branded to match the national organization and the other chapter sites. Microsites are typically a single page or just a few pages. They have space for basic information related to the chapter, like location, contact information, board member bios and upcoming chapter events.

### Benefits of a chapter microsite

While being somewhat independent, microsites are typically integrated with the national association's website. This connection allows members to easily navigate between the main site and the chapter microsite.

Microsites also provide local chapters with:

- **Local Focus.** A microsite makes it easy for members and potential members to find information and resources specific to the local chapter, including events and activities, while also easily accessing information related to the organization as whole.
- **Consistent Branding.** They typically adhere closely to the overall branding guidelines of the parent association, ensuring a unified look and feel between the two.
- **Member Engagement.** They offer a platform for local members to engage both at the local and national levels.
- **Autonomy.** Local chapters often have some autonomy when it comes to updating and managing their microsite content. This makes it easier for the microsite to meet the immediate needs and interests of the local membership.

### Are microsites enough for association chapters?

With their intimate connection to the parent organization's website, microsites do deliver a number of benefits. One of the biggest benefits is the centralization of critical chapter information. This centralization makes it easier for members to find high level local chapter information, while remaining connected to the parent site.

Depending on the size and complexity of a chapter, a microsite may not be enough to meet the needs of their membership. With the size limitation that comes with most microsites, they don't have room for much information. Chapters need to decide what to highlight on their microsite, and members still have to get much of the more detailed chapter information through other channels. The local chap-



ter needs to create those channels to handle a lot of their outreach and house their information, like event summaries, payment and registration, job boards, members only forums, etc.

### **Can a chapter benefit from having both a microsite and a website?**

Having both a microsite and a local chapter website can be a benefit for both the local chapter and its membership. In fact, we have many association chapter clients that have both a microsite on their parent organization's website and a separate local website.

Microsites force chapters to get really clear on their messaging and offerings – to get it to fit on the small footprint of a microsite. The microsite becomes a wonderful place for members to read quickly about the chapter and get basic, but high-impact, information.

Chapters can drive traffic to their association chapter website from the microsite, by including links to web pages. There, readers can get details on what they just read and take further action that they can't accomplish on a microsite. On the larger chapter site they can ask and respond to questions in a members only section, register for an event and pay, renew their membership and much more.

A microsite that's part of your national association's website isn't always enough to give a chapter a robust local presence or brand and engage well with its members. But having one along with a robust association chapter website can be a highly effective, easy way to give members exactly what they need. It can be a great tool in your quest to provide more local member value and an engaging, growing, thriving brand.

