

StarChapter Preferred Vendor Named To Top 15 U.S. Association Management Companies, A Q&A With Paragon Events



We're excited to share that Paragon Events, a full-service association management company and a member of the StarChapter Preferred Vendor Program (PVP), has been named to Hubilo's list of top 15 U.S. association management companies (AMC), of AMCs with demonstrated expertise in virtual and hybrid events. This list includes AMCs that demonstrate significant innovation and have adopted virtual events and hybrid events as part of their offerings.



"Paragon Events has leveraged StarChapter's capabilities to assist many organizations grow and succeed, even as the Covid-era negatively impacted other similar chapters," said Jami Karper, CAPM, Manager of Implementation & Support, StarChapter. "Cee Clarke-Butler, (Paragon Events Assistant Director of Associations) has been using StarChapter for many years and has become extremely knowledgeable about the software. She and her team streamline processes and find ways to engage both members and prospective members while allowing association chapter board members to focus on their organization's mission."

Paragon Events has more than thirty years of experience working with association chapter leadership teams, helping them achieve goals that include member engagement, association chapter thought



leadership and sponsorship. Another of Paragon Events' strengths is managing association chapter virtual and hybrid events.

Recently, we spoke with Randa Griffin, Paragon Events Marketing Manager, to learn more about the organization, this accomplishment and their work in the virtual and hybrid events space.

What do you feel Paragon provides to their clients that led to this accomplishment?

It's an honor to be recognized by Hubilo as one of the top AMCs in the US. We understand the unique needs of each association and tailor our services accordingly. We believe in a people-centric approach to association management – the experience and needs of association members are at the forefront of each decision. From budget management to sponsorship activations and member drives, we strive to be true strategic partners, guiding informed decisions and innovative solutions.

Events are at the core of connection and community. That's why we pride ourselves on creating seamless and engaging hybrid and virtual event experiences, ensuring that our clients stay on top of industry trends and never miss an opportunity to engage. We're always looking for something to elevate our clients and take our programs to the next level.

How have you been able to cultivate your expertise with virtual and hybrid events?

When COVID-19 first began to impact the US, we knew what it could mean for the future of events. We quickly pivoted to become virtual event experts, vetting over 40 event platforms and undergoing hours of virtual meeting training. It was vital to keep channels available for people to continue connecting and meeting even if they couldn't in person. Since then, we've maintained an emphasis on virtual experiences, which also translates into hybrid meetings. We're so happy that in-person events are back and stronger than ever, but we know virtual meetings offer a lot of possibilities, especially for associations looking to gather frequently and quickly.

Our expertise in virtual and hybrid events is the result of continuous learning, staying abreast of industry advancements, and investing in cutting-edge technology. We actively participate in industry conferences, engage with thought leaders, and leverage our experience from successfully executed events. This commitment to staying ahead in the virtual and hybrid landscape allows us to continuously offer innovative solutions to our clients.



How do you determine the type of event – virtual, hybrid, in-person only – to suggest to a client?

Our approach involves a thorough assessment of the organization’s goals, target audience, and the nature of the content or event. For example, a 60-minute educational session may lend itself well to a virtual environment, while a large networking event may translate best to in-person. Budget is a huge factor, along with accessibility, attendee locations, and desired level of engagement. Our association clients know their member preferences, so again we’re always keeping the attendee experience front of mind. Once we clearly define the goals and budget, we like to use a decision tree model to look at things holistically and determine the best approach.

When preparing for a hybrid event, how do you ensure that both audiences get the best experience?

Our priority with any event is ensuring a memorable and effective attendee experience. With hybrid, you’re essentially planning two events simultaneously, because you have to address the specific needs of each to ensure you’re providing value to all. That means a separate budget, agenda, activities and technology. You never want virtual attendees to feel like they’re getting “less” of an experience. Incorporating polls, chat rooms, Q&A, and other engagement strategies are crucial in a virtual atmosphere.

You also have to remember the fun stuff! We’ve held hybrid events where in-person attendees met for a happy hour, while virtual attendees attended a digital mixology class where they made a drink at home along with the instructor. Although the experience is somewhat different, it still provides opportunity and value – a memorable takeaway that will keep people excited.

Good technology is a crucial part of a hybrid event. If you’re live streaming or broadcasting a session, audio and video clarity can make or break the experience for all attendees. Testing is hugely important to avoid as many technical errors as possible.

Any success stories for member engagement, thought leadership, or sponsorship? If so, how were you able to support them in achieving their goals? How does StarChapter help?

We have seen continued success in our Meeting Professionals International (MPI) chapters since the initial impact of COVID. Recently, MPI Greater Orlando received an award for Overall Excellence and



MPI Tampa Bay Area was awarded Top Performing Chapter for exceeding their annual goals. (Both are StarChapter clients.)

StarChapter plays a crucial role in these association chapters' ability to streamline communication, event management, and membership tracking. The platform enhances collaboration, allowing us to easily create forms and track volunteer involvement. Our support extends beyond technology, as we work closely with these chapters to tailor strategies that align with their specific goals, resulting in measurable success and member satisfaction. MPI Orlando has a retention rate of 73.9%, proving members continue to see value in the association.

The StarChapter Preferred Vendor Program

The StarChapter PVP allows us to support AMCs, administrators and executive directors by giving them the tools to expand their business while increasing membership, attendance and revenues for associations and the chapters they manage.

Congratulations to Paragon Events!

