

AMS: That Chapter Honorary Board Member That Gets It All Done



All those administrative activities it takes to run your association chapter...paying bills, tracking member engagement and keeping membership up to date updated, sending communications, managing events, etc., are great at using up board members' time, aren't they? And that's not a great thing for anyone.



With all those behind-the-scenes tasks, where do board members find the time to meet your chapter mission, provide what members need to stay engaged and bring in new members?

Many chapters use Association Management System (AMS) software, but few use them to their fullest potential. Are you aware of all the ways you can use your AMS to help your chapter? They offer a whole lot more than event registration and online payment.

When a chapter board take full advantage of their AMS, it becomes the responsive, extra set of hands they need, quietly handling all those key "paperwork" tasks, giving them back the time to actually implement all those great plans they've been talking about.

How does an AMS help association chapters?



“AMS” is a generic acronym for all-in-one association management software platforms like StarChapter. Using an AMS, membership-based organizations can manage their entire membership lifecycle in one place, from prospecting to membership, retention and even retirement.

The list of all that an AMS can manage is long. An AMS system’s core functionality is its ability to connect and stay connected to everyone, members and member guests, vendors, sponsors and all other chapter audiences.

AMS systems help chapters better manage operations by centralizing information and reducing the manual work required to run your chapter. When used efficiently, they become that volunteer that doesn’t quit, doesn’t need to be voted onto the board, doesn’t have term limits and can work whenever you need it, to keep people better informed and engaged.

An AMS can empower everyone in your chapter. Boards can use it to manage member databases, track renewals and engagement, run targeted email campaigns and make data-driven decisions. Members can update their profiles, register for events, pay their membership dues and see who will be attending the next monthly meeting. And vendors can submit and pay invoices with ease.

Through their AMS, association chapters can engage everyone they need to without adding systems or coercing additional volunteers to help.

Make the most of your chapter AMS

Chapters often underuse or ignore their AMS because their board and their members aren’t clear on all it can do for them or how they can and should be using it. Members may not understand, for example, how to update their out-of-date email address or even how to find their membership information. And board members may not know how to access membership data or run financial reports.

Rather than assuming people will just figure things out on their own, think about how you can make using your chapter AMS easier and a more complete experience for everyone.

Have an AMS committee that regularly connections with your board, members and other audiences, to learn where their pains are, i.e., how they use your AMS, where do they need help and what else they wish they could do with it. Conversations like this often highlight that board members and general



members aren't aware of all the AMS functions and that the chapter may still be using tools that don't or can't interact with each other. Some of the biggest gains for chapters come from consolidating siloed tools that often require paper and input from several people, like spreadsheets, sign in sheets and multiple email platforms into the AMS.

Offering live trainings throughout the year and having recorded webinars, user guides, quick tips, etc. available can make using the AMS, and by default, most chapter tasks easier. Resources like these, and providing a contact for questions, can take away a lot of the headaches and deliver a more seamless user experience, and make it easier to do things like pull up financial information before and during board meetings for review and discussion, create stronger event descriptions and automate renewal reminders and event confirmations.

The real benefit of an AMS? Everyone gets back time for what matters.

When you use your AMS for all it can offer to your chapter, the administrative work the board needs to get done decreases and sometimes significantly. With the time they get back, chapter leaders can focus on those tasks that have more of an impact, like programming and education that grows membership, keeps members engaged and members guests involved, and moving guests to members.

How can you use your chapter AMS, that perfect "board member," more strategically, to make your chapter run more efficiently and as a result, more impactful and sustainable for the long term?

