

Three Ways To Give Your Association Chapter Members The Local Content They Need



As association chapters look for ways to continue to provide unique and tailored local experiences for their members that go beyond monthly meetings and speakers, the importance of specialized members-only content can't be ignored. In the ever-evolving landscape of association chapters and professional organizations, providing content just for your members should be a cornerstone of your member engagement plan to foster engagement, feelings of exclusivity, and perceived value for them.



A digital members-only content hub for articles, videos, webinars, etc. is a great way to engage your association chapter members, by making it easy for them to find what they need. Some organizations are doing a great job of creating members-only digital hubs, providing exactly what members are looking for, and housing it on their websites in areas set aside just for them. At the same time, there are countless chapters who know they need to offer something like this but are having a hard time getting started.

They're stuck, either because they don't have access to the right technology to make it easy to manage, or because they just don't know how to pull it all together in the ways their members will want. If you know this is something you want to focus on and do a better job of providing, here are a few ideas to get you started.

3 local content ideas to engage association chapter members

Set goals. Setting goals for your association chapter members-only content hub will help you better understand how the hub needs to function, before you start planning and executing. Your main goal should be to create a place where members can go to find content that's just for them, but it's important to spend time doing your research before you start uploading documents to determine things like:

- **The kind of material you'll have in your members-only hub.** Is there something that members keep asking each other, your board, or emailing your chapter repeatedly about?
- **Whether the members-only content hub will be a revenue generator.** If so, would you need to look for sponsor companies or members who would pay to have their value-add content in the hub?

Consider potential challenges. Think about any internal and external factors that could create possible issues.

- **Could the functionality of your association chapter members-only digital hub be limited by the people available to manage it?** If that's what you learn, think about including more evergreen content, so you can avoid the need to add material regularly or risk having a hub full of outdated information.
- **Are there topics that some in your organization could find controversial?** That would be good to know before you start and help you better set the type of content to include.

Discover early what your members want. Sure, you can organize your digital hub with the content you think your members want. And you could be right, and you'll get great feedback. Or you could be way off and find that you're providing members with one thing, like recordings of your monthly meetings, and it turns out they all come to the meetings and don't need to hear it again. What they really would prefer instead is to hear from subject matter experts on specific topics. Wouldn't it be better if you felt confident you were on the right track before you developed your members-only hub?

There are several effective ways to collect this information. Send out surveys, hold focus groups, review your website analytics, even check your web search history, to see what your members are looking for that you may not be delivering. And, instead of bogging down your board with another task they don't have time for, pull in some volunteers and create a committee to help. They'll be more



likely to jump in, if you explain the benefits of the project and what they'll get in return (in addition, of course, to the gratitude of the entire chapter!).

It's one thing to build an association chapter members-only content hub and launch it with your members, but it's just as important, maybe even more, to have a plan for keeping the hub running successfully for the long term. Without a plan, you risk it turning into a big library of things people don't look at or a hub for your marketing materials. And members only content can be a great way to get your members to eliminate the "why am I paying for membership in this chapter" thought from their minds.

