

Transitioning To A New AMS Doesn't Have To Be Overwhelming



So, your association chapter board has been considering an association management system (AMS). That's a fantastic move, both for the board and your chapter. Just wait till you and your chapter members start to experience the benefits of using a single platform for everything your chapter needs, including:

- Giving members what they want to be better engaged with the chapter
- Saving time on all your administrative tasks
- Making it easier for your association chapter board to collaborate
- Growing your membership by making it easier for people to join and stay

Moving to an AMS is just what your chapter needs. But when you start to think about everything involved in implementing a new system, it stops you cold. How will you get it all done and make sure it's all working the way it needs to and all in short order?

The AMS implementation process shouldn't be what keeps you from taking your chapter to the next level. When it's done right, an AMS implementation is a highly approachable and manageable process.

We've been told that the StarChapter AMS implementation process is unique. We work closely with our

customers to understand their needs and prioritize those needs in our defined, organized process to ensure success right from the start.

To better understand how a StarChapter AMS implementation works, we spoke with our Manager of Implementation & Support, Jami Karper, CAPM. Jami shared a few of the steps that we follow with customers to deliver a seamless AMS implementation. Our onboarding process is set up for success and allows our team of experienced project managers to correctly configure the StarChapter AMS to support a chapter's goals and processes, right from the beginning.

Customers tell us what they need and want BEFORE we start. In an initial kickoff meeting, the StarChapter project manager works with the chapter's project leader to determine the priorities for the implementation. What do they want to focus on first?

- Centralizing their board functions?
- Providing online registration for chapter members?
- Updating their website?

Based on that discussion and the other information we collect, the StarChapter project manager determines the best way to configure the software for that chapter. And they get chapter approval before moving forward.

The intense planning we do at the beginning helps ensure the project focuses on the right outcomes. This is critical to our software experts' ability to complete the initial setup that allows chapters to launch their systems with a solid foundation.

Boards have ample time for training early on. With the time chapter leaders save from not managing the implementation, they have the time to review all the AMS training materials we have available. This helps ensure they, and their members, will be comfortable with the new system when it goes live. As part of a customer's StarChapter AMS subscription, we also offer live training. So, customers can get up to speed quickly, even after board members transition and new members join.

Chapters have a single contact. Chapters are assigned a StarChapter project manager as soon as they decide to move forward, and they work primarily with that person throughout the process. This contact asks questions and requests basic information prior to the kick-off meeting. Following that meeting, the project manager provides a customized list of materials they need from the client. As we



receive those materials, the StarChapter team migrates content, configures data, and works with the customer to finalize a design style guide for the website.

Chapter responsibilities are simple and clear. The customer's role includes:

- Providing all requested materials
- Reviewing and approving the design style guide
- Reviewing the system prior to launch

The StarChapter AMS goes live only once we receive approval from the chapter's project lead.

We perform a thorough QA check before the site goes live. Once we have key items in place, our quality assurance team completes an in-depth review. After the team is satisfied their criteria have been met, we give the chapter project lead access to the AMS. At this point, they can request edits or training or immediately approve the launch of the system.

The StarChapter onboarding process ensures the organization gets a system configured to support or improve their current processes and needs. This helps guarantee that the software supports the organization rather than the organization having to change to accommodate the limitations of the software. We don't tell you what you need. You tell us what you want to focus on and how you want things set up, whether that's membership, events, registration, web content, or something completely different.

Onboarding a new AMS could very well seem overwhelming, with everything you've been dealing with these past few years, from COVID-19 to declining memberships and who knows what else.

Are you going to cobble together a chapter infrastructure using free website builders, email tools, Excel, etc.? Will you find a cheap AMS and do the implementation yourself? Or is the right move to select an implementation you drive the priorities on, but don't have to manage?

The decision is much easier than you think.

