

Why You Should Consider Asynchrony for Association Chapter Events



Asy-what?

Many association chapter boards have never heard the term asynchronous or synchronous or know the difference between them. It's important that you clarify these terms and understand how your members interact with different types of programming and see how asynchronous virtual programming may be what your association chapter members are looking for.



Synchronous versus asynchronous chapter events

Synchronous events as they relate to your association chapter are those virtual events that run in real time. Guests attend together but they do so from different locations. Asynchronous events and programs run on a much more relaxed schedule. Attendees can access the programming and any relevant materials as they want, at different times and from different locations.

How has attendance been at your virtual events? Are you seeing what you want, in terms of the numbers of association chapter members who attend and who they are (new members, career changers, retirees, etc.)? If the same people attend or view your association chapter virtual events, whether live or recorded and replayed at a certain time, these synchronous event types might be keeping you from engaging those you want to attend.



Providing asynchronous association chapter events and programming puts you a step ahead, when you deliver a revolutionary twist on traditional virtual events that can increase your association chapter member engagement.

Traditional boundaries of time and place are out for association chapter members these days. Working models have changed considerably due to COVID; there's a good chance they'll never go back to what they were. Many people, including your members, no longer work in an office or work from 9am to 5pm. These days, they can choose where they want to work and when, whether from home or in a hotel in a different state, at 5am or 10pm.

All that flexibility means there are no longer perfect days and times to host your events. Members who may have, in the past, been available to attend one of your association chapter education sessions at 6pm on a Tuesday, may not want to do so or be able to, even if it's virtual. Instead, the demand is growing for digital, always-on content, and smaller, bite-sized experiences members can access on their schedules. Asynchronous events can give your members what they want, whenever they want it. They can help you expand your offerings, better engage existing association chapter members and even bring in new ones. Consider adding some asynchronous events to your offerings as you move further into 2022 and beyond.

Add on to your virtual events

Perhaps you know from talking to members that they appreciate your virtual speaker sessions. There's no reason to end them. But it's time to do more. Start with a virtual live meeting, where attendees watch, listen and interact with your speaker at a set time. Then, post that recording in your members-only forum for people to watch, for the first time or again whenever they want. But it's not enough to just to post a link and expect people to engage with it. Monitor the discussion at set times and ask questions to keep the conversation going. Some may engage in the middle of the night or early morning, and for others it will be mid-day.

Record your virtual events and write summary blog posts for people to read and then watch the recording. Ask readers to comment in the thread underneath the recording or the blog post once they've watched it.

Podcasts and blogs



Where some events can have both synchronous and asynchronous components, podcasts and blogs (written and video) are opportunities for completely asynchronous offerings. Members can listen, watch, and read this original content of different lengths and easily accessed from your association chapter website, on their schedule. And you can engage by starting conversation threads, asking questions, asking for opinions and suggestions about these topics on your discussion board.

Whichever you choose, you'll need a volunteer who can monitor the offerings and respond in a timely manner. Curate your comment sections and consider asking for help getting the conversation started; sometimes writing that first comment is the hardest.

Synchronous and asynchronous programming aligns with the different interests, personalities, and learning styles of your membership. Figure out what works best for your audience, with the understanding that many of your members will benefit from more asynchronous programming. They're getting burnt out with synchronous virtual events, and asynchronous programs are powerful alternatives. You're giving members control over how and when they interact with your chapter. Which they'll thank you for in the long-term.

