

Writing The Association Chapter Event Descriptions That Bring In Members



We're just going to put it out there. Many online association chapter event titles are pretty weak. Think: Chapter Meeting. Monthly Meeting. Tuesday Luncheon. Monthly Educational Session. And many of the association chapter event descriptions that go with those titles are just as bland, or worse, they don't exist. Readers see nothing about the topic, the speaker, the location, etc. There's nothing to engage them or make them want to give up some of their time to attend.



Why are association chapter event descriptions important?

It can be hard to find volunteers to manage your online association chapter event information; you may think it's better to have basic or generic event information online than not have anything. But, if the same people attend your association chapter events each month, or worse, fewer people are registering and showing up, it could be because they have no idea what the event is about, and no reason to be excited about attending.

Having self-explanatory, relevant association chapter event titles and descriptions is critical to getting the right people to register for your events and attend and ultimately get them more engaged with your chapter.



5 ways to improve association chapter event descriptions

Your association chapter event description could be the first, and maybe the only, information a potential attendee gets about your event. And they are going to use what you do, or don't, provide, to decide whether or not to attend.

Here are five ways you can ensure you have strong association chapter event titles and descriptions.

1. Know your goal. What's the purpose of the event? Are you raising money or launching a new initiative? Connecting the chapter to the local community? Providing continuing education credits? Networking? Hearing an amazing speaker? Only once you know what you want people to take from your event can you create a description that includes the details they need.
2. Understand your audience. Who will benefit most from attending? What will those people want/expect? Review your association chapter demographic information and feedback from similar events you've held, member surveys, etc. Do your members prefer to listen to speakers at a sit-down dinner? Or would they be open to something different, like an outdoor event with hands-on learning? See how other organizations position their events to an audience like yours.
3. Include the right details. Make an outline, so you're sure to include what's relevant. Provide what readers need to know, like who will be speaking, who will be in attendance, what the topic is, where it's happening, when the event is, why you're holding it and even how the event will take place (inside, outside, zoom, etc.). Include links to questions potential attendees could ask, to save them, and you, some time and confusion, like directions to the location or a speaker's bio. And don't forget a contact for questions.
4. Tell a good story. Think about what it's like to read an interesting, full news article. By the end you've enjoyed reading it, and you've probably learned something. A news story includes a lede, with essential details, followed by the body of the article -- with details that expand on the lede -- and the tail, which reminds the reader of what they just read. You can do the same thing with your association chapter event description. Present the facts and the details, and get potential attendees interested without being over the top and too exciting. If you've held this sort of event before, you could include a written quote or video recommendation from a previous attendee.



5. Keep it simple. If your online event description takes too long to read or makes a potential attendee think too much, they might not finish reading. And if that happens, there's a good chance they won't register.

a. Use white space. Web readers don't like long blocks of text. If you need to include a lot of information, use shorter sentences and paragraphs, interesting, engaging headlines and/or bullet points.

b. Use simple, straightforward language for a more general audience – skip the flowery words, adjectives, jargon and acronyms.

c. Review and edit your description before you post it. Ask someone to read it or let it sit and come back and look at it, to be sure it'll be clear to someone who isn't you.

Examples of effective association chapter event descriptions

One of our clients, the New Mexico Public Relations Society of America (NMPRSA) does a strong job with their association chapter event descriptions, starting on their home page, with their engaging titles and short summaries. Clicking on a View Details link takes the reader to a descriptive summary.

Take their PR Think Tank event. With a title like “PR Think Tank: Insights Into Building Integrated Campaigns,” members knew immediately what the event would cover. The event page provides the details a member or guest needs to decide if they can and want to attend, beginning with a date, time and location right at the top, and followed by the lede. The reader is immediately drawn in with:

Need to think about other tactics to add to your public relations plan, but don't know if you've covered all the bases for a fully integrated campaign? Join us for this special networking/roundtable event with experts in their respective fields.

Through bullets, white space, and simple language, readers learn exactly what's going to be covered, who will do it, and they get more information about the location, etc.

You can easily tie your problems of stagnant or declining association chapter event attendance, and even chapter membership, to weak event descriptions. Before potential attendees agree to spend their time and money with you, they want more about what they'll get from spending a few hours with you. Given them the information they need to feel it'll be worth their investment, and you could find yourself with a whole new group of new members.

