

# Your Chapter is Missing Out if You're Not Promoting Micro-volunteering

Is your chapter's To Do list a long one? Writing weekly blogs for the next six months and getting those posts uploaded? Writing your newsletter and sending out the email every month? Setting up and running your monthly meetings? Managing all aspects of the website?



Perhaps you've been looking for help with some of these tasks for months. If your goal is one person for each task, you could be asking too much of your members. In today's harried environment, many just don't have the time, or interest, to commit to on-going projects that can take up a lot of their time or require in person participation.

## Have you Considered Micro-Volunteering?

Do you really need one person to handle each task? You might get them done more quickly if you break each larger task into smaller, more digestible ones. Ask several people to write your blog and another group of people to post them online. Consider using different groups of five

people for each of your monthly meetings. One can write the email, another can send it, one can schedule the venue, one can order the food, and one more can confirm everything gets done.

Micro-volunteering can help you get your chapter tasks done at the quality you need, while decreasing some of the stress you're feeling with all those open To Dos.

## Benefits of Micro-Volunteering

In addition to striking through the items on your list, there are a number of other benefits of using multiple people to accomplish a single task.



1. **Take advantage of varied interests and availability.** Perhaps a member isn't sure they want to commit eight to ten hours a month to organizing and executing your monthly meetings. But perhaps they would be interested in writing two blog posts a month and sending out meeting invitations in that same amount of time.

2. **Broaden your volunteer base.** By breaking tasks into smaller chunks, you increase the number of people who can volunteer. You'll begin to hear from those who've never volunteered before, others who want to take on a bit more but not an entire role, and others who are considering changing how they volunteer.

3. **Provide a path to volunteering.** Perhaps there are people in your organization for reasons you don't know – low-self-esteem, shyness, illness, etc. – have not volunteered for these larger tasks. By asking them to take on smaller projects, you're giving them the chance they try things out on their terms. Often, this leads to their taking on larger roles and responsibilities.

4. **Improve chapter reach and capacity.** When your tasks are broken down, you'll find yourself with needs that can be accomplished remotely or that tap into a person's particular expertise, like advocacy, fundraising, and scheduling. Consider, for example, asking some of your millennials to help with the website or email. They can do

it quickly and from wherever is best suited to them.

5. **Empower your volunteers.** These smaller activities give your members greater control over their involvement and a greater sense of ownership over their task. They decide where and how it gets done, including when they start, completing it on their terms and schedule.

6. **Give members a voice.** They joined your chapter for a reason. By allowing them to take on smaller tasks such as writing a single blog post, or helping with an advocacy event, you're giving the person a chance to express that reason.

7. **Provide new and different experiences.** Micro-volunteering allows volunteers, if they choose to, to complete a number of different tasks. They could write a fundraising email one day, contact new members the next and call caterer on the third. They step out of their comfort zones and take on roles they may not have tried if the requirement was much larger or more complex.

The Baltimore chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA) is an example of a good use of micro-volunteering. One of their micro-volunteers is our own Rebecca Chadwick, Director of Sales & Marketing for StarChapter. The AMA relies on volunteers to write its blog posts, which come out a few times per month. They were having difficulty finding someone to write all of the posts, so they



divided the need into a number of micro-tasks. Along with a number of other members, Rebecca writes one blog post every few months, and each post takes her just a few hours.

“I wanted to help the AMA, but my schedule wouldn’t allow me to take on a large role,” she says. “As I’m one of several writers, it’s not a big time commitment and fits into my availability. At some point, perhaps I can do more, but for now, I’m contributing in the way that works best for me.”

According to the VP of Marketing and Communication for the chapter, Brynn Devereaux, micro-volunteering has been just what they need to achieve

their goals. “Our volunteers are able to add value to our committee as their time permits - as much or as little as that may be,” she says. “Having a number of volunteers completing smaller tasks not only helps us tackle our to-do list, but helps our committee evolve and grow.”

### **Is Micro-volunteering the Future for Chapter Volunteers?**

Chapters can’t survive without volunteers, and micro-volunteering allows chapters to engage their volunteers at a level they’re comfortable with. And, by involving members on a smaller scale, it will be easier to transition many of them to larger roles in the future.

