

Summary: 2011 Chapter Project Surveys

Overview

-Invitations were sent on 1 March 2011 to current presidents and past five presidents of IABC's largest chapters (19 chapters, 105 invitations total). There were 33 respondents (31% response).

-Invitations were sent on 1 March 2011 to current presidents and past three presidents of IABC's mid-range chapters targeted for growth (60 chapters, 190 invitations total). There were 75 respondents (39% response).

-The survey focused on various aspects of chapter service and function with the goal of finding differences between the two groups that might (1) aid mid-range chapter leadership to focus their efforts in order to grow (2) help HQ better understand what assistance it needs to provide (3) understand uncontrollable factors in chapter development

Major findings

Some major differences were found between the target chapter group responses and large-sized chapter responses. Those with a difference of 10% or more are noted below, divided into controllable and uncontrollable factors. While there may be a "chicken and egg" question with at least some of these factors, it appears that there are some opportunities.

Controllable Factors

| <u>If you had to pick one thing, what do you believe is the most important factor in growing and maintaining your chapter's size?</u> | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Chapter professional development offerings | 36% | 13% |
| | | |
| <u>Please rate the quality of your chapter's services.</u> | | |
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Job Listings (excellent plus very good) | 9% | 44% |
| Networking events (excellent plus very good) | 38% | 64% |
| Special interest groups (excellent plus very good) | 0% | 36% |
| Mentor-matching (excellent plus very good) | 1% | 27% |
| Member recruitment efforts (excellent plus very good) | 9% | 33% |
| Member retention efforts (excellent plus very good) | 7% | 34% |
| Communication to members (excellent plus very good) | 26% | 58% |
| Volunteer recruitment (excellent plus very good) | 10% | 42% |
| Volunteer training/mentoring (excellent plus v. good) | 5% | 24% |
| | | |
| <u>Which of the following do you do for events?</u> | | |
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Usually vary the time of day | 28% | 42% |
| Usually vary the place | 42% | 55% |
| | | |
| <u>Which of the following member recruitment tactics do you perform regularly/actively?</u> | | |

| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Reach out to companies in pursuit of corporate packages | 19% | 42% |
| Promote worldwide member month | 81% | 97% |
| Sign up and promote chapter member month | 63% | 73% |
| Encourage chapter members to recruit new members | 47% | 61% |
| <u>Which of the following member retention tactics do you perform regularly/actively?</u> | | |
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Research member expectations and perceptions of value and share results with chapter leaders | 48% | 79% |
| Contact new members by email or phone | 73% | 95% |
| Conduct orientation sessions for new members | 8% | 48% |
| Invite members to volunteer | 77% | 94% |
| Contact members by phone or email as they lapse | 70% | 85% |
| <u>Which of the following volunteer management tactics does your chapter perform actively/regularly?</u> | | |
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Partnering new volunteers with experienced ones | 19% | 36% |
| Performing succession planning | 62% | 82% |
| Evaluating volunteer performance | 6% | 18% |
| Taking steps to avoid volunteer burnout | 30% | 58% |
| <u>Does your chapter have a paid administrator?</u> | | |
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Yes | 23% | 58% |

Uncontrollable Factors

| <u>If you had to pick one thing, what do you believe is the most important factor in growing and maintaining your chapter's size?</u> | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Market conditions in region | 15% | 28% |
| <u>Rate how conducive the following market conditions are to a large-sized chapter in your area, with 5 being highly conducive.</u> | | |
| | <u>Target</u> | <u>Largest</u> |
| Population of communicators (highly conducive) | 28% | 70% |
| Presence of large companies (highly conducive) | 22% | 48% |

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Presence of a large number of companies (highly cond.) | 22% | 45% |
| Competition to IABC (highly conducive) | 16% | 3% |
| Culture of joining associations (highly conducive) | 4% | 16% |

Comments

The write-in comments offered additional insight and detail.

Large chapters were asked for their most popular professional development (PD) topics. Major themes are:

- Measurement
- Social media
- Personal development
- Career development
- Case studies from well-known companies
- Trends in the profession
- Crisis communication
- Panels
- Topics targeting self-employed/independent members

Large chapters were also asked what advice they would give a smaller chapter. Major categories and/or representative comments are listed below:

- All board members should consider membership sales as part of their job description.
- Get members engaged in the chapter (e.g., volunteering, put member photos on the chapter web site).
- Make personal connections with every member. Make people feel welcome. Offer new member orientations. Live the brand of an inclusive, inviting community. Have a buddy system in your chapter.
- Have special interest groups for subsections of the chapter.
- Educate members on what's special about IABC.
- There no one thing that makes a chapter successful; it's a combination of things.

Chapters in the target category were asked what HQ could provide to help grow membership. Major categories and/or representative comments are listed below:

- Help with volunteer recruitment/retention
- Marketing/advertising/PR assistance (lists, pitches, ideas, etc.)
- Partner mid-sized chapters with large-sized ones, so the latter can mentor
- Ideas for PD sessions/implementation
- Raise profile of IABC/professional communicators
- Share chapter best practices by email

Next Steps

- Develop communication to chapters in target group to ensure they are knowledgeable about the results of this survey and next steps, particularly in areas that chapter leaders can control.
- Educate leaders about what is available already in the Leader Centre that addresses concerns raised in the surveys.
- Develop volunteer recruitment/retention guide to document best practices.
- Develop strategy to address other issues raised by the surveys (e.g., marketing, partnering, PD, and profile of IABC).