

**2021 Chapter Management Awards Work Plan
IABC Nashville: Chapter Events**

ABOUT IABC NASHVILLE & CHAPTER EVENTS

Based in the heart of “Music City,” [IABC Nashville](#) is a small – but mighty – chapter that accomplished impressive things in 2020, despite facing obstacles and challenges thrown our way. With just a few months into the year and a fresh new Executive Board of Directors slate, we kicked off the spring season with a devastating tornado in Nashville, followed by the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The early months of 2020 did not look promising to our chapter. Still, we were able to remain positive and optimistic while pivoting our strategy for the year – to implement virtual events quickly and effectively while keeping members engaged, active and excited about IABC Nashville.

Before the world entered the “new normal” of Zoom meetings and virtual events in 2020, communications professionals could attend our in-person IABC Nashville events and experience true southern hospitality at its finest – something in which we take great pride. However, in April, our chapter – like many others – had to shift from 100% in-person to 100% virtual events, but that didn’t stop us from continuing to offer valuable networking and professional development events just like we usually would. In fact, we embraced the opportunity that virtual events provide to collaborate with others and reach even more communicators across the globe.

Following two successful in-person events in January and February, our chapter went on to host twelve engaging virtual events throughout the remainder of the year - a mixture of professional development events, networking opportunities, and our annual Music City Gold Pen Awards (MCGPA) ceremony.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

IABC Nashville believes that professional development and networking opportunities are the cornerstone of successful membership engagement and the recruitment of new members for the chapter.

Prior to March 2020, our chapter’s goals for professional development, networking, and awards programming looked different in that these events had always been in-person. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our chapter’s revised goals were to remain committed to hosting these same events, however, they would be 100% virtual. We aimed to embrace the opportunity that virtual events provide to collaborate with others and reach and support more people in the communications industry in Nashville and beyond, specifically while working remotely and following social distancing protocols.

Below is a breakdown of our 2019 chapter events goals and objectives compared to 2020:

2019 Goals/Objectives	2020 Goals/Objectives (Applicable April-December 2020)
Host one professional development event per month, with at least 25 tickets sold. <i>(Does not include the months of September (reserved for MCGPA ceremony) or December (reserved for holidays)).</i>	Host one virtual professional development event per month, with at least 20 tickets sold. <i>(Does not include the month of December (reserved for holidays)).</i>
Host one networking opportunity/mixer bi-monthly, with at least 10 tickets sold.	Host one virtual networking opportunity/mixer bi-monthly, with at least 10 tickets sold.
Host one MCGPA ceremony, with at least 25 entries and 50 attendees.	Host one virtual MCGPA ceremony, with at least 25 entries and 50 attendees.
Utilize different communication channels to market and promote events.	Utilize different communication channels to market and promote <i>virtual</i> events.

BUDGET

Our Board of Directors’ philosophy is to budget most of our funds for professional development programming, networking opportunities for members and potential members, and hosting our annual MCGPA ceremony.

Our finances going into 2020 were stable. However, our main form of income usually came from profits from in-person

events and sponsorships. Our net income declined as we were not receiving much revenue from these events anymore. Although we didn't have a set budget for our virtual events in 2020, we spent only **\$149.90** on opening a Zoom Pro account (and now have a yearly renewal fee), and we also allotted **\$25.00** for thank-you gifts for our guest speakers after each professional development event. Our networking mixers were free of charge for both members and non-members and did not cost us anything to host. Our total net income from virtual events throughout the year was **\$561.60**.

For our annual MCGPA ceremony, we usually budget around **\$5,000** for the in-person event. Because our event was virtual, we relied heavily on in-kind and monetary sponsorships to be able to host the event. Below is a breakdown of the revenue and expenses for the 2020 virtual ceremony.

- Revenue = \$4,975
 - Award Entry Fees (\$1,975)
 - Sponsorships (\$3,000)
- Expenses = \$6,278.72
 - AwardForce Subscription (\$1,188)
 - Trophy Production Fees (\$1999.72)
 - StagePost Studios Production Cost (\$3,000)
- Net loss = **\$1,303.72**

IMPLEMENTATION

Below are a few ways our chapter aligned to meet our overall 2020 goals and objectives:

1. **Host one virtual professional development event per month, with at least 20 tickets sold; AND host one virtual networking opportunity/mixer bi-monthly, with at least 10 tickets sold.**
 - Purchased a Zoom Pro account to use for monthly board meetings and all virtual events (switched from using a free phone conferencing platform for board meetings that did not offer video capabilities).
 - Utilized the Eventbrite platform to create online events, sell tickets, track purchases and gain income.
 - Created a new pricing model to accompany virtual events. *[Please refer to the IABC Nashville Chapter Events Work Sample #1 for more detailed information]*
 - We pivoted to a more affordable pricing model due to many companies experiencing lay-offs, furloughs, salary cuts, professional development budgeting cuts, and more. We also wanted our members to have exclusive access to our events, as a bonus for being members of our chapter during such a trying year.
 - Branded the professional development events with the title, "Log in and Lunch," since they were hosted during the lunch hour.
 - Collaborated with other IABC chapters to gain new guest speakers, bigger audiences, and overall awareness of events.
 - Partnered with the IABC Southern Region, IABC Atlanta, KC IABC, and IABC South Carolina to host the event titled, "Log in and Lunch: Write to Win: Mastering the Art of Awards Submission Writing."
 - Hosted more events on the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion to promote IABC's Diversity and Inclusion Statement and Code of Conduct, and emphasize the role communicators play in ensuring equity. *[Please refer to the IABC Nashville Chapter Events Work Sample #2 for more detailed information]*
 - Hosted "Log in and Lunch: Diversity and Inclusion Panel: Talk the Talk AND Walk the Walk" in August 2020.
 - Hosted "Log in and Lunch: Working Together to Communicate Effectively Across Cultures" in October 2020.
 - After each event, we would provide the guest speaker(s) with a thank-you gift mailed to their home.
 - Hosted a total of **seven** virtual professional development events and **four** virtual networking events.
2. **Host one virtual MCGPA ceremony, with at least 25 entries and 50 attendees.**
 - Our VP of Awards was the spearhead of this event, with other assistance coming from fellow board members as needed.
 - Used the Awards Force platform for award entries.
 - Offered a special reduced pricing model for entering awards. *[Please refer to the IABC Nashville Chapter Events Work Sample #1 for more detailed information]*
 - A total of **36** awards were presented during the broadcast in a number of categories ranging from change communications to nonprofit campaigns.
 - 19 Awards of Excellence, 13 Awards of Merit, 2 Non-Qualifying, 1 Best of Show and 4 Leadership Awards (Rising Star, Communicator of the Year, Hall of Fame Inductee and President's Choice Award)



- Partnered with StagePost Studios, a local production company in Nashville, to safely film and execute the virtual ceremony using social distancing guidelines.
 - Danielle Breezy, Chief Meteorologist, WKRN News 2, served as guest emcee (In-kind sponsorship).
 - Sarah Lake served as musical guest (In-kind sponsorship).
- Invited Best of Show and Leadership Awards recipients to come on-site to StagePost to film their acceptance speeches.
- Invited Best of Show and Leadership Awards recipients' family members, co-workers and friends to film special congratulatory videos, which were used in a surprise reveal during the Facebook Live event.
- Created a branded sponsorship document with different levels to recruit new sponsorships to help cover the event's costs.
- Obtained more in-kind and monetary sponsorships than the 2019 MCGPA ceremony.
 - In-kind sponsorships grand total: **\$4,317**; Monetary sponsorships grand total: **\$3,000**.
- Successfully utilized Facebook Live as a streaming platform for the virtual ceremony, which has never been used before by our chapter. *[Please refer to the IABC Nashville Chapter Events Work Sample #2 for more detailed information]*
 - Reached a grand total of **3,726** people with **1,800** views, **618** reactions, **365** comments and **16** shares via Facebook.
- Hand delivered the trophies to each winner since they weren't able to pick them up in-person at the event.

3. Utilized different communication channels to market and promote virtual events.

- Utilized our social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and our IABC Nashville website) for all event promotions.
- Increased frequency and content of "The Connector," a chapter email newsletter sent monthly which includes a "Letter from the President" highlight.
- Contacted IABC Members Relations to post our events on the IABC virtual events website.
- Following the virtual MCGPA ceremony, we used the following communication channels:
 - Press release of winners sent via our partner, Cision / PR Newswire.
 - Email announcement of winners sent via Constant Contact.
 - Vimeo link and blog post added to the IABC Nashville chapter website.
 - Photo album created on our Facebook page with still screenshots.
 - Created a "Show Us Your Selfie" campaign on social media where award winners took selfies of themselves with their trophies once they were delivered.

MEASUREMENT

Our goals and objectives for the year were measured by:

- Monitoring overall ticket sales and net income from our events sold through Eventbrite.
- Sending a post-event email to all attendees, including an optional Survey Monkey survey to gather feedback.
- Monitoring our IABC Nashville Facebook platform for overview statistics from the virtual MCGPA ceremony.

Below is a breakdown of our original goals and objectives and the overall measurements (applicable April-December 2020):

Goal/Objective	Measurement
Host one virtual professional development event per month, with at least 20 tickets sold.	Hosted seven virtual professional development events, with 6 of 7 events having at least 20 tickets sold.
Host one virtual networking opportunity/mixer bi-monthly, with at least 10 tickets sold.	Hosted four virtual networking opportunities/mixers, with 3 of 4 events having at least 10 tickets sold.
Host one virtual MCGPA ceremony, with at least 25 entries and 50 attendees.	Hosted one virtual MCGPA ceremony, with 36 entries and reaching 3,726 people via the Facebook Live broadcast
Utilize different communication channels to market and promote virtual events.	Utilized social media channels, email marketing, IABC website, IABC Nashville website, and press releases to promote virtual events.



Top Post-Virtual Professional Development Events Survey Feedback:

- “You did a great job pulling this first of its kind of event together. Great that we had attendees from out of town, too.”
- “Love that you pivoted to a virtual setting during this time to keep continuity of programming.”
- “Nice job and well produced. I know that moving to a virtual platform has been challenging but you all have executed it flawlessly.”
- “This was a rock-solid presentation. Top shelf stuff.”

Top Attended Virtual Professional Development Events:

1. “Log in and Lunch: Write to Win: Mastering the Art of Awards Submission“ (July 22, 2020)
 - **131** tickets sold; General Admission (free)
 - \$0.00 total income*
2. “Log in and Lunch: Difficult Conversations: Keeping Your Cool Under Pressure” (September 23, 2020)
 - **39** tickets sold; 25 IABC Member (free), 14 Non-Member (\$15)
 - \$245.70 total income
3. “Log in and Lunch: Diversity & Inclusion Panel: Talk the Talk AND Walk the Walk” (August 19, 2020)
 - **34** tickets sold, 24 IABC Member (free), 10 Non-Member (\$15)
 - \$150.00 total income

**This virtual event was hosted in collaboration with other IABC chapters. It was our highest attended event for the year; however, we made this a free event for all attendees since we were mostly targeting IABC members or anyone interested in entering an award. A lesson learned from this event is that we most likely could have kept our original pricing model to make a profit.*

RESULTS

Key Successes in 2020:

- Made a seemingly seamless pivot from **100% in-person to 100% virtual** board meetings and monthly chapter events, overcoming the challenges that accompany a change of this magnitude.
- Hosted two successful in-person events (pre-pandemic) followed by twelve virtual events. These virtual events made the chapter a net profit of **\$561.60**.
- Hosted a workshop titled, “Log in and Lunch: Write to Win: Mastering the Art of Award Submission Writing,” in collaboration with other IABC chapters, with **131** attendees from all over the world who learned about award entry best practices.
- Hosted a panel discussion titled, “Log in and Lunch: Diversity and Inclusion Panel: Talk the Talk AND Walk the Walk”, where local experts shared their insights on strategic ways to create a corporate culture of diversity and inclusion – whether in a small business or large company.
- Broadcasted the first-ever virtual 2020 MCGPA ceremony on Facebook Live reaching **3,726** people with a total of **36** awards presented, despite our chapter questioning early on whether we could pull off this event during the pandemic.

IABC Nashville is rightly proud of what we achieved in 2020 and are looking forward to the future ahead. We hope to see continued growth in 2021. We plan to continue engaging with members virtually (and perhaps in-person later in the year) and continue partnering with other IABC colleagues and trying new endeavors.