



Help for Struggling Chapters

Three components for creating a healthy chapter:

- A good knowledge of your chapter's needs and challenges
- A good plan and vision to meet those needs and challenges
- A good board to create and execute those plans

Here are some strategies and tactics that IABC leaders have successfully used to help revive chapters.

Determine your members' needs and how you can fill those needs.

- Start by creating and sending an email survey. However, this can provide you with useful intel only if enough people respond. If not, then it's time to pick up the phone.
- Focus groups can yield valuable insight. Make it a yearly event.
- Take informal polls at events. Give each of your board members one particular question to ask attendees.
- Ask people:
 - What's affecting your work life?
 - What is creating the most pain?
 - What corporate initiatives are driving your schedule?
 - What trends are piquing your interest these days?
 - What skills do you need to develop?
 - Would a special interest group help meet your chapter's needs?
 - What is more important to you: professional development or networking, or are both equally important?
 - How often would you use an active IABC LinkedIn or Facebook group to get answers to your work problems?
 - Is distance an obstacle to your attendance? The Los Angeles chapter is addressing this by holding mixers and PD events in different areas of the county. A webinar or Skype discussion group is another option. But don't make this your sole method for PD. People also need face-to-face networking.
 - What would you take time out of your day to learn?
 - Are finances an issue? If PD events are too expensive for people to attend, hold inexpensive mixers in a restaurant's lounge area and order appetizer platters as needed. Attendees can pay for their own drinks. And, if a PD element is desired, hold round table discussions focusing on current topics or trends.
- In addition to a survey, look at who is attending your events.
 - Are they corporate employees or independent consultants?
 - Are they from a particular industry?
 - Are they from a particular geographical area?
 - Do the same people show up at luncheon or evening events?
 - Just as important as the people who *are* attending your events, who *isn't* attending?

Create a vision and plan with goals based on your chapter's greatest needs.

- Develop a vision and be passionate about it.
- Ask, "What if?" But make sure your "what ifs" are in line with your chapter's needs.
- Keep it simple. Choose three achievable goals that will move your chapter toward accomplishing your vision. It's like a football game. Keep making first downs that march your chapter toward its ultimate goal.
- Look at IABC headquarters' events on the calendar and leverage membership months or webinars by planning your own events around them. Membership months are a good time to put your best foot forward with your PD and marketing.
- Use information and resources available via other chapters, your region (if you have a regional board), or through IABC headquarters. Go to the "[Resources](#)" page in the [Leader Centre](#) on the [iabc.com](#) website or post a question on the [IABC Chapter Leaders](#) LinkedIn group page. And if you have some wisdom or resources to share with other chapters, please send them to [Micayla Felicion](mailto:Micayla.Felicion@iabc.com) at IABC headquarters (mfelicion@iabc.com).
- Think long term and use [Chapter Management Award](#) winning entries as a guide. <https://www.iabc.com/leader-centre/chapter-management-awards-2-2/>

Tips for creating and active, engaged board:

- Be an inspired leader. It will help motivate your board. Reading inspirational books like *Good to Great* and *Payoff* can help fuel ideas and energy.
- Advertise your purpose, plan and success to your members. It lights a fire in the chapter and inspires your volunteers.
- Reward and thank your volunteers.
- Measure your results. Document your progress and check items off your strategic plan list as you go. It will help you realize how far you have come and will make entering the Chapter Management Awards easier. It also inspires your board to get their action items done.
- Recruit often and early. Don't wait until the end of the board year. Some people may have thought about volunteering, but haven't raised their hand yet. They just need to be asked.
- A board student liaison role can be valuable in nurturing future young board members.
- Develop a "can-do" attitude.
- Personality conflicts and toxic board members can derail a board. A team building exercise using a personality test can help board members learn how to work with each other. Some examples are:
 - [Strengths Finder](http://strengths.gallup.com/110440/about-strengthsfinder-20.aspx) <http://strengths.gallup.com/110440/about-strengthsfinder-20.aspx>
 - [DISC assessment](https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/) <https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/>
 - [Myers-Briggs](http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/) <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/>
 - [How to Fascinate](http://www.howtofascinate.com/) (2015 World Conference Speaker) <http://www.howtofascinate.com/>
 - Free online personality tests:
 - <http://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>
 - <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>
- Recruit the most positive, hard-working people to your board. Make it a point for each board member to think of the most positive thing accomplished by their position or the chapter as a whole that month.
- As Jim Collins said in *Good to Great*, "Get the right people on the bus and in the right seats." Use your vision to help attract good recruits. Show volunteers "what's in it for them."
 - Look at a board candidate's LinkedIn profile, website and any blog posts. See if you can get referrals or background information on a potential board member. Do they go to most of the PD events? Take a candidate to coffee or lunch and ask why they want to volunteer. Do they have a vision for that board position? What do they want to learn? What have they gotten out of IABC? What *more* could they get out of it?
- Pay attention to your intention. Are your board members there to help people? Members won't support you if they are there mainly for self-promotion. The promotion will come by serving the chapter well.

- Look for long-term commitments from people.
- Set a good example.
- Give your board a sense of purpose and a solid direction to help ward off apathy and burnout.
- If board members have a problem with leadership skills, bring in some leadership training. See if a company or independent consultant will donate this.
- Educate your current or potential members on the value of volunteering for your board. Help board members understand and *experience* what's in it for them by getting them connected and involved.
 - Show them how this is a safe environment to learn a new skill. Start people out with small volunteer jobs that will give them a learning experience and additional networking opportunities.
 - Make sure they are the first people to hear about job openings. IABC's real strengths are the people and connections.
- Be thankful: Kudos go a long way. Thank your volunteers in public and in private. Create a volunteer recognition program with profiles in the newsletter and awards. Send a hand-written note when someone accomplishes a goal.
- Be ready to jump in and pick up the ball when someone else drops it.
- And finally, PLAY! Make sure you and your team have fun doing this.

For further questions about this presentation, contact:

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Chapter Leader Resources:

Get to know the Leader Centre <https://www.iabc.com/leader-centre/>.

- Download the IABC Brand Guidelines and your chapter's logo. <https://www.iabc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/IABC-Brand-Identity-Guidelines.pdf>
- Find detailed resources based on topic and see what management tools work for other chapters through templates and tips under the Resources tab. <https://www.iabc.com/leader-centre/resources/>
- Find out about IABC events, especially the annual Leadership Institute. <https://www.iabc.com/leader-centre/events/>
- Read past editions of the monthly Leader Letter. <https://www.iabc.com/leader-centre/leader-letter/>
- Check out past CMA winners' entries for great ideas on topics like professional development, financial management or sponsorship. Learn how your chapter can become a winner! <https://www.iabc.com/leader-centre/chapter-management-awards-2-2/>

Access member and prospect information with the Membership Management Area (MMA).

Your role as Chapter Leader grants you access to the Membership Management Area. MMA lists your chapter's members and status, details record changes, provides current chapter demographics and includes an "email my chapter" function.

Reach out to IABC headquarters staff.

IABC headquarters staff is ready to help you succeed in your important role as a chapter leader. Contact information for IABC headquarters staff may be accessed at www.iabc.com/about-us/leaders-and-staff/staff/.

Join the IABC Chapter Leaders group on LinkedIn and post your challenges, wisdom and successes at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5068578>