TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION               2
Who Is This Guide For?      3
Grow Your Membership        4
Retaining Members          5
Grow Your Volunteer Base   7
Building An Online Community 8
Event Ideas                11
Guide To Hosting Any Program 16
Program Plan Template      19
Coda                      20
Credits                   21
INTRODUCTION
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From our founding in 1944, ASMP has been dedicated to helping professional photographers succeed creatively and in business practices. That support has been rooted in the idea of strong communities built by members, working locally while sharing knowledge and experience.

Today, more than ever, it is critical that ASMP be built on the basis of strong local chapters populated by members who care and share. We recognize that the global economy is continually being driven by large waves of technological changes and that power dynamics require individual creators to band together to ensure our ongoing capacity to contribute to cultural expression and the creation of a visual history for future generations.

To be successful, we need to create places of vibrant activity, beginning with the local chapters, where like-minded people can meet and share information that makes all better informed. Our local chapters need to be welcoming, inclusive, and committed to beneficial sharing so photographers with different backgrounds, ages, and photographic interests can all grow together. By accepting differences, as well as embracing commonalities, we can ensure that best business and creative practices are shared in a positive way, and that there is always something new to be gained from continuing engagement within the ASMP photo community. By banding together in thriving local chapters, we can also achieve more on the advocacy front where solidarity is essential if the voice of the individual visual creator is to be heard by those with the power to shape the legal framework that defines our business opportunities in the 21st century economy.

The stakes now are enormous and this guide is intended to provide tools, resources, and guidance to local chapter leaders who are seeking to encourage members’ positive growth. Careers are marathons run on the basis of passion, perseverance, and a commitment to being excellent individually while also being valuable to others. Helping members find their voice and vision creates an organization that benefits all.
WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

It is not uncommon for even the largest chapters to sometimes find themselves in a rut. If you are a chapter leader who is finding that your chapter is in need of a jolt, this guide is for you.

Even if you’re not, the Guide has lots of tips for easy-to-implement programs, as well as ways to increase your membership and hold on to your current members.

This guide is a living document. If you have suggestions as to how it can be improved or notes on what worked or didn’t work for your chapter, please share them!

You can reach us on the “Contact” page at the ASMP website.

If you are trying to understand the nuts and bolts of how a chapter is formed and what the general rules are, this guide is may not be for you. If that’s the case, check out the Chapter Leader Handbook, and then come back and join us here.
ASMP relies totally and completely on our membership: photographers helping photographers.

Of all the things chapter boards do, recruiting new members is among the most important. Next is keeping the ones you have.

Chapter events, websites, and leaders are the gateway into ASMP. You provide the first impression, and sometimes the last.

Every chapter of whatever size shares the same challenges recruiting and retaining members. There is a long history in the Society, and the following suggestions are built on the experience of hundreds of leaders over the decades, all of whom were in your shoes - and some who are still active in their chapters.

Arrange for board members to visit as guest speakers at university photography classes.

Partner with universities to mentor students on an ongoing basis.

Reach out to meet-up groups and photo clubs and invite their members to chapter events.

Hold frequent “Get to Know ASMP” social events. Particularly, reach outside your circle by inviting non-members from the photography community. Encourage current members - not just board members - to be ASMP evangelists.

Utilize the Merit Member offering. Each chapter gets to give away two paid memberships per year! These could be given away as part of a drawing, or an award in a contest, or to talented students or young professionals who might benefit.

Talk to new and potential members face-to-face whenever you can.

Have brochures and related materials easily available at all meetings. Consider placing them on every seat at an event, and certainly at the registration table, or near the food and drink table.

At the start of each meeting take a few moments to speak about the Society and what it offers both emerging and established photographers. Talk about what ASMP membership means to the local community and to the industry at large. Pick a member benefit to describe, describing potential savings.
Once you have new members, how do you keep them?

ASMP has about as many people drop their membership every year as join.

This means there are thousands of people who at one time were sold on the value of the organization, and then, for some reason, decided to let their membership lapse.

They may not have been satisfied with chapter events or not felt welcome.

They may simply have forgotten to renew.

The following page has some tips to help you keep the members you already have.
Retaining Members

Create at least one meaningful interaction with every new member during the first month or two. Start a conversation by calling on the phone or by sending an email.

Assign board members and volunteers to the new member “welcome process”. It should not fall only to the president to reach out.

Send personal invitations to new members for meetings, programs, or to volunteer on a regular basis.

Respond to members’ communications with the board quickly and in a friendly way.

Create engagement through social events, mentoring, and informal guidance by seasoned ASMP members.

Ask your experienced members to serve as mentors, and consider starting a mentoring program.

Announce who the new members are at the beginning of each meeting. Do things to make networking opportunities easier for them by such acts as simply introducing them to other members.

Pay attention to how your programs and events are working. Update and maintain chapter records on a regular basis by evaluating each one shortly after they are done.

Best-practices for chapter leaders:

Always be high-touch and inclusive.

Face-to-face conversations can provide mental and emotional support for your members - and give you a better sense of what they want. The more you respond to them, the more they will want to engage with your chapter.

Help everyone, board member or not, be their “best selves,” whatever their experience level.
Grow Your Volunteer Base

Chapters depend on a network of volunteers to help ensure their success.

The Chapter President is the point person for the rest of the group and should delegate tasks to other members of the board, as well as chapter volunteers who are willing to help.

It’s so important that leaders feel comfortable assigning tasks to other people, allowing them to assume responsibility for seeing tasks through to completion. Burnout is always a potential problem for everyone on a board. This means walking a fine line between supporting others while also giving them ownership over the situations delegated to them.

As you assemble willing participants to help you, consider also that there will be chapter members who might be willing to volunteer even if they don’t want to be on the board.

It is really helpful to occasionally hold town hall style events or social gatherings where members can meet other board members and be invited to participate on a deeper level.

Board members should be prepared ahead of time to approach people they feel are well suited and talk to them about becoming involved. Explain that some of the benefits of being a volunteer are the chances to help shape the offerings of the chapter, to establish meaningful and mutually supportive relationships with other members of the community, and to have face-to-face interactions with key influencers - not to mention how good it feels to give back to others.

Sometimes people are too shy to volunteer on their own; they need to be asked, and once they accept, they need to be welcomed, supported, and nurtured by the board.
Building An Online Community

Another important way to build community today is online.

The national organization has increasingly been using tools such as Adobe Connect and Google Hangouts to bring people together. This is also a great way to involve people in chapters with widespread geographies.

Whether you use these tools for an actual program or as an in-between way to facilitate a discussion, these are great tools to consider.

It may also be possible to live-stream your event so those unable to make a long drive that night can listen in.

Some boards also meet by phone or online. While this isn’t preferable to in-person meetings, it may be a good way to have more frequent meetings to keep the ball rolling on projects.

Tools to consider:
Google Hangouts
Adobe Connect
LinkedIn
Skype
Periscope
Instagram
Facebook
HOSTING EVENTS

**Business**

There is always a hunger for more information about the nuts-and-bolts. This is the widest category of events, covering topics like copyright, contracts, releases, marketing, website design, social media, digital workflow, negotiating, color-management and printing, computer health, graphic design for photographers, portfolio reviews, book publishing, training in software, what photo buyers are looking for, video and audio training...and more.

Everyone from established pros to students and emerging professionals has an area where they feel a shortcoming or some level of confusion, or the need to be competent outside their specialty, or simply a curiosity about other areas of photography and media in general.

Often enough, the concerns of professionals and people starting out can be very similar, particularly when it comes to things like social media or portfolio reviews.

**Inspirational**

The range of topics can be pretty broad here also, but often comes down to more personal presentations: photographers talking about their work and career, consultants discussing how to market yourself and structure portfolios, or panels or groups of photographers interacting with each other - and, of course, the audience.

Many photographers find they are shooting in a wide variety of areas, with the result there is interest in a wide variety of photographers: travel, fashion, architectural, advertising, fine art, and all the rest, so chapters find there is an audience for virtually every specialty and every combination of specialties.

**Social**

These events are mostly about fun, getting in some hang-time with your peers, and for people to meet in a non-structured way; like a party with a bit more purpose. The range of events is also pretty wide: pints-and-pixel slideshows, small groups getting together for coffee or breakfast, photo tours, even something as simple as a backyard BBQ or holiday party. These events can be held almost anywhere, including venues you don’t have to pay for, like restaurants, bars, a donated studio, or even someone’s lawn.

This is a particularly terrific way to get people to show up who are not as interested in more structured kinds of events, yet are just as critical to a chapter’s success - there needs to be ways to build community that are low pressure - both for the people who attend and people like yourselves who produce the events.
Geography

Meetings don’t have to be restricted to just one place. Most chapters have members (and potential members) living in large geographic areas, covering several counties - or states. Obviously this affects turnout.

Chapters have floated events all over their geographic areas, and that includes helping set up “sub-chapters” that do many of the same things the main chapter does, with some help and counsel from yourselves.

Sub-chapters can do pretty much anything the regular chapter does, with the exception of board meetings.

As long as the sub-chapters work with the local board, they can receive some of the benefits chapters get from the national office, such as being compensated for expenses.

Don’t be shy about granting permission to your sub-chapters to organize gatherings as long as they coordinate with the board first.

You can also have people attend your events - or the sub-chapter’s events - remotely, as simply as using Skype or a Google Hangout, or by having someone video an event and post it online or send a file to the sub-chapter.
EVENT IDEAS

Following is a list of easy-to-implement events suggested by chapters around the country who have produced them successfully. Many of these events can be hosted with a minimal outlay of time and resources.

However, all these ideas are meant as starting points. By all means, feel free to make them your own!

On page 15 you’ll find a step-by-step guide for hosting any event.

For instance, it’s up to you to decide what to charge. Every chapter has a different financial situation depending on their size, so look at your numbers and decide what’s best for you. You can certainly alter what you charge from event-to-event.

It is a given that every event is an opportunity to grow your chapter, but that should not interfere with any program being both useful and fun.

Use these starter events to build enthusiasm for the chapter and recruit new members so you can move on to programming with more content or that are more relevant to your chapter.
1. Pints & Pixels

This is by far the most common and successful go-to program chapters use to get people to come out.

The premise is simple. Invite your chapter members to join you at an accessible location such as a bar, studio, or even a private home. Invite all attendees to submit up to 10 photos of their choosing to be included in a slideshow that loops during the event. Talk to each other and have a good time!

**Category:** Social event  
**Venue:** Studio, Bar, Residence  
**Cost to Chapter:** $50-200 (Depending on venue and whether you provide food and drinks or have people just pay at the bar)  
**Time to set up:** 2-4 hours  
**Additional needs:** Laptop and projector and screen, or a large-screen TV w/ a DVD player or DVI port.  
**AKA:** Brew & View

2. 10x10x10

This is another popular event that tends to draw a good crowd. Invite 10 members to talk about 10 images of their choosing for a period of 10 minutes each.

Often featured speakers are considered “emerging” photographers, but there’s no reason why they can’t be more experienced pro members or a mix. This tends to draw a good crowd as featured speakers often bring their friends and supporters to the event.

This can be a members-only event or free and open to the public. Consider opening the doors to everyone as it’s a great way to showcase the work of members while bringing in potential new members. Featured photographers do not necessarily have to be ASMP members.

**Category:** Social/Inspirational  
**Venue:** A Member photographer’s studio or Gallery. The venue needs enough space for a projector.  
**Cost:** $50-400. Usually food and beverage of some kind are served. Other costs could include the projector, the venue and chair rentals.  
**Time to set up:** 2-4 hours  
**Additional needs:** Laptop and projector and screen, or a large-screen TV w/ a DVD player or DVI port.  
**AKA:** 4x15. Depending on the size of your chapter you can have fewer people talk for a longer period of time. Do whatever works best for your group.


This program is similar in nature to a Pints & Pixels, but with more substance. For this, members can get together at a coffeeshop, bar or studio for a group discussion on a specific topic.

A chapter leader creates a handout on the topic, talks about it for about 15 minutes and the conversation on the topic moves around the table.

This can be about any topic you want, such as marketing, portfolio design, etc.

**Category:** Social/Business  
**Venue:** A private room in a local brewery, studio, coffeeshop or private residence.  
**Cost:** Beer/coffee, snack or appetizers. About $150-$350  
**Time to set up:** 2 hours
4. Studio Open-House

Chapters arrange to have 2-3 established members with studios open their doors and people travel between the studios. Attendees get to see the studios, hang out, and have some refreshments.

Depending on the geography of your chapter, having the tour in more than one studio at a time may not make sense. Consider only doing one or two studios. Also, consider smaller studios as well as the big ones. It may be just as interesting for your attendees to see how a small business operates as it is to see the high-end spaces.

**Category:** Social/Inspirational  
**Venue:** Members studios or prominent local studios  
**Cost:** $50-200 (Providing refreshments should be the only real cost for this event.)

5. Docent tour of photography museum or exhibit

This can be a fantastic and informative event if your area has a worthwhile photography museum or gallery exhibit.

You may be able to arrange with a docent or curator to give your chapter a private tour of the museum, a specific exhibition, or the museum’s archive.

**Category:** Educational/Inspirational  
**Venue:** Local museum or art gallery  
**Cost:** FREE! (or almost free!)

6. Coffee & Conversation

Though it sounds similar to Pints & Pixels, this is an informal series of regular get-togethers that can offer your members a routine way in which they can meet with other members for an hour to talk shop.

Try adding to your calendar regular meeting times; say, every Wednesday morning at different coffeeshops spread around your region. This is a great way to make ASMP accessible to photographers of all skill levels and interests.

The Kansas City chapter regularly hosts this event and say that, having tried both, they prefer organic conversations for these gatherings rather than fixed topics. They note that the conversations are usually very good and naturally go on for more than the scheduled hour. “On any give morning we’ll talk about bidding, licensing, infringement, copyright registration, business practices, new photography books and exhibits, gear purchases and recommendations, contracts, ethics, art… There’s never a dull moment or awkward pause with nothing to talk about.”

You should have at least one ASMP board member present at all events to represent the chapter. This is such an easy and enjoyable way to build - and maintain - your chapter.

**Category:** Social/Business  
**Venue:** Various neighborhood coffeeshops  
**Cost:** FREE!  
**Suggestions:** The Kansas City chapter suggests that the 4th Wednesday of each month become “Cocktails & Conversation” at a 4th venue for those who can’t make the morning meetups.
7. Tech Talk Tuesdays

If you’re looking for something similar to coffee & conversation, but with a little more structure, this event might work for your chapter.

This is a series regularly hosted by the Ohio Valley chapter that is a members only gathering centered around a technical topic such as color profiling or lighting techniques. They hold the event every odd month alternating with Pints & Pixels events on the even months.

**Category:** Business/Social  
**Venue:** Studio, color lab, camera store  
**Cost:** $200-500  
**Suggestions:** Approach local experts among your membership or in the local community, depending on who is available in your area, and ask them to share their knowledge of their expertise.

Presenters are often happy to do this for free as it’s a great way for them to demonstrate their expertise and potentially gain new clients. As with any event, whether it is a member’s only event or open to the public is up to you.

8. Shooting demo

Similar to Tech Talk Tuesdays, you can host a one-off event or series consisting of shooting demonstrations.

The Long Island chapter has had some success with hosting demos of fashion and food shoots. “If we use the word ‘model’ anywhere in the title - we will run out of chairs,” noted one board member, also mentioning that their most recent food shooting demo sold out.

**Category:** Educational  
**Venue:** Member studio or outdoor location  
**Cost:** $200-600  
**Suggestions:** Ask a local modeling agency to donate talent in exchange for giving them a platform to tell the crowd about their business at your event.

Similarly, invite people from peripheral industries, such as the restaurant business, to the demo. It’s a great way to have a big audience and give attendees a chance to make meaningful business connections.

9. Portfolio Reviews

Portfolio reviews are a great way to bring out members and non-members alike. While it may require a large effort and expense to bring in prominent ad buyers, it can be much easier to host a review by peers.

One chapter offers short casual portfolio reviews by local creatives, maybe 15 minutes, then everyone socializes, has some drinks, and continues to interact.

After the success of this event, try arranging a review with ad buyers in which people pay for reviews, with members receiving a discount.

**Category:** Business/Social  
**Venue:** Studio, meeting hall  
**Cost:** $50-200 (light refreshments)
10. Business Basics

Invite in an expert such as a CPA, insurance agent, or media lawyer to talk about their area of expertise. Topics could include how not to get audited, sued, stiffed, or how to handle a copyright infringement.

Professionals who serve the photography community are often happy to lend a couple hours of their time to get in front of an audience of potential clients.

11. Charity/Giving Back

There are several ways your chapter can work to serve the local community. These types of programs are great for building camaraderie within the chapter by having members come together to help others, and gives the chapter a presence in the community, which is a great way to bring in new members.

Two popular programs ASMP chapters have had success with are Flashes of Hope and Help Portrait, but there may be others to consider in your area. Chapter leaders can get in touch with these organizations, find out how to help, and organize a program around it. This often means photographers donating their time to take meaningful pictures for people who are sick or disadvantaged.

Flashes of Hope
Their mission statement reads: “Flashes of Hope raises funds to accelerate a cure for children’s cancer while honoring the unique life and memories of every child fighting cancer.” This is where ASMP steps in, having our members volunteer to visit hospitals and take beautiful portraits of the children, which are then printed and donated to their families. How to www.flashesofhope.org to find contacts in your local area.

Help Portrait
Their site reads: “Each December, photographers, hairstylists and makeup artists all around the world will find people in need, take their picture, print their picture and then deliver it—free of charge.” The San Diego chapter has had success with this program, even teaming up with local high school students to provide an educational experience for them. Find out more about how to make this happen in your area at http://help-portrait.com/

Category: Charity
Venue: Hospital
Cost: Free

12. Sponsored Speakers

Depending on your region, you may be able to host a Canon Explorer Of Light or similar program. In this case, Canon, or the sponsoring company, will send you one of their speakers on their dime.

The only cost to the chapter is the venue and food.

Other manufacturers, such as Nikon and Sony, also have a great roster of sponsored photographers.
GUIDE TO HOSTING ANY PROGRAM

Finally, here are general guidelines for how to host any program, from inception through promotion and execution.

These ideas come to us from several chapters. We hope you'll find this helpful!

Now get out there and host an event!

**WE STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT the program page be live on your chapter website at least 2 months before the program.**

Get board concensus when deciding to host a program. Clearly present what the program will be about.

Create a folder for your event. It’s a good idea to have a shared folder, for example on Google Drive or Dropbox, where board members, or at least the programs chair and senior officers, can access all relevant assets.

If your event requires a presenter follow these steps:

**TOPIC**
Solidify the topic with the presenter. Share your ideas and listen to theirs to make sure the program is on point and useful.

**TIMEFRAME and DATE**
A typical program runs 1.5-2 hours. Often Monday through Thursday are the best evenings.

Plan ahead! Try to give yourself as much lead time as possible in order to properly promote the event.

**SPEAKER FEE**
Every chapter has a different financial situation. It’s best to set a budget to determine what you can spend per event and then determine a comfortable speaker fee from there.

Consider doing a few cheaper events to save money for a more costly speaker if seeing that person speak will be a benefit to members.

**SPONSORSHIP**
Sponsors are a great way to produce more costly programming. Find out if the presenter has any relationships with possible sponsors (gear / software they use etc.).

Ask them to get in touch with possible sponsors, or, preferably give you the contacts to pursue using their name as a calling card. Have your Sponsorship Chair reach out to the potential sponsor to maintain the relationship.
Hosting Guide Continued

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
Find out what your presenter’s technical needs are. Things to consider: do they have or need a laptop, hard drive, projector, screen, a podium, specific software, or audio. Audio is a good idea if the space is large.

Encourage your speaker to back up their presentation on a thumbdrive for quick transfer between computers if necessary.

TRAVEL and LODGING
If the presenter is coming from out of town, discuss train and plane tickets along with hotels. Be clear about budget limitations.

It’s easiest to let them book their own travel and lodging (encourage them to do it early to get a good deal). Have them forward flight info / reservations to you for your reference.

Let them know someone will be assigned to transport them between airport, hotel, and venue if needed. They must hand in all their receipts and a speaker fee invoice to you in order to be compensated. You can also offer a per diem on food.

PROMO IMAGES
Get a headshot and a few examples of their work related to the presentation. Confirm who should be credited for each shot. Files must be JPEGs and at least 1080 pixels on long side. Create a promo images folder in your shared folder and place them in a subfolder specific to this event.

Book venue for the program. Have your programs chair keep a list of possible venues to consider and approach the most appropriate venue. Things to consider are the cost of the venue and what amenities they have, such as chairs, audio, and a projector if needed.

Create a program page for your website and your email marketing. Consider creating a template (perhaps as a layered PSD file) that can be easily modified for each event. Store the template in your shared folder.

Create a registration page on ASMP’s website to get a headcount and collect money.

Pricing. Every chapter and every event is different. Determine your costs and if you need to subsidize the event with a door fee. If so, it is common to create a tiered pricing structure in which students pay $5, members $10, affiliates (such as APA or PPA) $15 and non-members $20.

Consider creating a pre-screen flyer that will be projected on the screen before the event starts. Make a layered PSD consisting of the ASMP logo, the name of the event, speaker, and description.

If you have the budget, consider making a printed flyer or poster using a variation of your program page or pre-screen file. This can be distributed to schools and placed on bulletin boards at your local camera shops.

Assign point people for your program and recruit volunteers. Typical events require someone to order and pick up food, work the door, set out chairs and materials, make sure the speaker gets to the event and that their technical components are ready, take at least a few photos to share on social media and, lastly, clean up. Don’t do it all yourself! Your programs director can keep a list of volunteers to contact in advance of every event (and to recruit new volunteers).

Start promoting the event via email and Facebook invites at least a month out to give people time to plan. Send emails once a week until the event is adequate without being too much of a nuisance.
Hosting Guide Continued

**ONE WEEK BEFORE THE PROGRAM**

Discuss food options with food point person. Pizza is a good option, but you don’t need to provide a full dinner! Consider catering-size salads and snacks such as nuts, cheese and crackers, and/or chips and salsa.

And here’s a tip: set out small plates and people will take less food. Log into the ASMP website and go to Events to see how many people are registered so you’ll have an idea how much to order.

Create a checklist to make sure all things are being accounted for. Check in with all the point people to insure they are coming and are on top of their responsibilities.

Make sure all rentals have been ordered and that delivery from rental companies or pickups have been arranged.

Send an email invite to your mailing list one week out and the day before the event.

**DAY OF THE PROGRAM**

Print out your checklist and make sure everyone is doing what they should be - and doing it on schedule.

People setting up the event should arrive at least an hour early to set up chairs, electronics, and a check-in table.

Take good care of the presenter, making sure they have water, are introduced around, and feel welcome.

**AFTER THE PROGRAM**

Be sure the venue is cleaned to venue’s expectations, and thank them for the use of their space.

Send the speaker a thank you note.

Collect all the receipts from the caterer and presenter, including an invoice for their speakers fee, along with travel, lodging, and food. File everything into a Receipts & Invoices Folder in your Program Folder and mail or email to the Treasurer.

Take note of the turnout and record the number along with the cost of the event. Storing a spreadsheet on your shared Google Drive folder is a good way to do this.

Share photos of the event during and after the program on whatever social media channels your chapter is using. Take the opportunity to thank everyone involved (volunteers, board members, vendors, speaker, and any sponsors) for their help and participation.
American Society of Media Photographers

ASMP “Your Chapter”

Program Plan

Program Title:

Date:

Working Description:

Location:

Promo Writeup:

Topic Outline:

Speaker Bio:

Material Requirements: (Sample…)
- Table for sign-in / registration
- Table for food / beverages
- # Chairs
- Backgrounds (white cove, foamcore, screen, etc…)
- PC / Mac computer
- Projector
- Extension cords, video connectors/wires…
- Coffee maker, plates, cups, napkins, cooler…

Budget: $

Promotion: (Sample…) Items in italics are still to be accomplished
- Posted on website with online payment link
- Posters and 5x8 postcards distributed by board members to local schools/stores/etc.
- Submissions to community calendars / social media
- Email blasts

RESULTS

Attendance:

Income: $ + *Itemized separately

Expenses: $ + *Itemized separately

Profit / Loss: $

Recommendations for future events like this:
SO...

It’s important to remember that all the work; all the difficulties in coordinating people, things, and places; and all the learning curves involved in being a chapter leader just comes down to… people.

People want to be part of a community.

Professions like ours are relatively unique because so many of us so often work alone. It’s hard to know what our peers are up to, what they charge, how they deal with problems, how they manage their time, how they keep their careers chugging along.

Members join ASMP for lots of reasons, but we have learned the main one is to be part of a community: to know about, learn from, and hang around with, our peers.

It’s a lot of work to be a chapter leader, so you may as well enjoy yourself. You’re at the heart of a terrific community and you get to be exposed to - and support - your peers and your industry.

Every one of us benefits from helping fellow professionals and learning to understand more deeply our own careers as well as our industry. You are making a difference.
The Quickstart Guide

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