

# Professional Development/ Programs

The function of the professional development chair is to develop and implement programs and topics to be covered throughout the year. Some chapters have two people, who are co-chairs, to share the responsibilities. Professional development is an integral part of your chapter's activities. Good program content will get your members to meetings and will keep members. A recent NAMA membership survey showed that more members are likely to attend chapter meetings than national meetings.

The first step is to discuss the plan with your board. Many chapters survey their membership at the beginning of the program year to ask their members where their interests lie. These surveys can also help chapter leaders determine the most desirable time of day and week to hold chapter meetings. If you'd like to conduct a survey, the NAMA office can assist you by sending it out to your members and compiling the results. Contact Debbie Brummel at [debbieb@nama.org](mailto:debbieb@nama.org) for more details.

Once you've determined what your members are interested in, you can begin brainstorming topics and speakers and put them on the calendar. Remember to use the tools below to plan and promote your meetings.

You can obtain a listing of chapter programs and events from past program years by visiting "Leader Resources" on the website. This list contains program names, speakers, and contact information. It can help you get ideas for your upcoming year.

Several chapters take advantage of NAMA webinars for chapter meetings. Members are invited to gather at a central location to have a "brown bag" lunch while listening to the webinar and, possibly, have a discussion afterwards.

## Planning, Promoting, & Running a Chapter Meeting

Chapter members want to attend an efficiently run and informative meeting. That doesn't mean that you have to run the meeting using all the rules and formality of Parliamentary Procedure. It is necessary to be in control of the meeting, though, insuring that the business at hand is covered; your members are informed; and a program is in place.

### Planning a Chapter Meeting

The following steps are helpful to insure that your meeting is a success.

- Choose your program topic.
- Choose the dates of your programs - the sooner this is done the better chance you have of finding the facility you prefer. Keep in mind that hotels are very busy and have some meetings scheduled years in advance. You may also want to keep in mind that September and October are busy months for meetings and conventions, and this may have an affect on the prices of your meeting room rental, sleeping rooms, etc.
- Choose a location.
- Choose a facility.
- Request a bid from each facility you select. Give them the dates you prefer for your meeting and optional dates if possible.
  - Let the facility know if you will be needing sleeping rooms for attendees who may come from out of town. (You may not need sleeping rooms.)
  - Give them the size of the meeting room you will need (about how many attendees will be in the room), what times you will need the room(s), and how you would like the room(s) set

- (i.e., banquet style, conference style, theater style, classroom style, etc.).
- If you are requesting sleeping rooms, let them know a range of acceptable room rates.
  - Let the facility know of any food, beverage, or audio visual you will need. If you are not sure at the time of requesting the bid, that's okay, you can add that later.
  - Generally, if you have requested some sleeping rooms and/or food and beverage, there will not be a charge for the meeting room rental. Otherwise, expect to pay a nominal rental fee.
  - Develop an agenda to insure that you cover the information necessary and important to your members. (An example is posted.)
  - Determine the fee for attendees.
  - Establish an effective communication process so that all members receive sufficient notice of an event. The sooner you promote the event, the better your chances are for good attendance.
  - Chapters are welcome to have attendees register through the NAMA registration site. Credit card fees are deducted from the next chapter reimbursement. Please allow at least 24 business hours to set this up. If interested or if you have questions, contact Debbie Brummel at [debbieb@nama.org](mailto:debbieb@nama.org).

## Promoting Your Chapter Meeting

Once you have selected your facility, you'll want to begin promoting your event. For most chapter meetings, you will probably want to send an invitation to your members by broadcast email (complimentary email services are offered through the NAMA office). Don't forget to post it several times on Facebook and Twitter, especially if you've set up a chapter site. Encourage chapter leaders and members to post and tweet it, too, both beforehand and during the event. A direct mailing can be done as well, but consider the cost of the mailing and the time needed to mail out a brochure or note. (Remember the NAMA office can send you labels of your members to help with the mailing.) If your chapter has a website, you will want to post your meeting there. You should also send your meeting announcement to Debbie Brummel in the NAMA office at [debbieb@nama.org](mailto:debbieb@nama.org), so the information can be posted on the main NAMA website. This can help with attendance, especially for travelers to the area.

## Running a Chapter Meeting

- Utilize the agenda! It will keep the meeting on track, and allow your members to anticipate and participate in different aspects of the meeting.
- Start the meeting on time.
- Introduce new and prospective members. (Or have the membership chair do it.)
- Involve the board in various aspects of the meeting.
- Be confident in your introduction of speakers and express your appreciation.
- Thank members for attending and close the meeting in a timely manner.
- Be sure to send a thank you letter to your speaker(s). ***There is a sample chapter meeting agenda posted.***