

Association Executives of North Carolina

Success *Live*

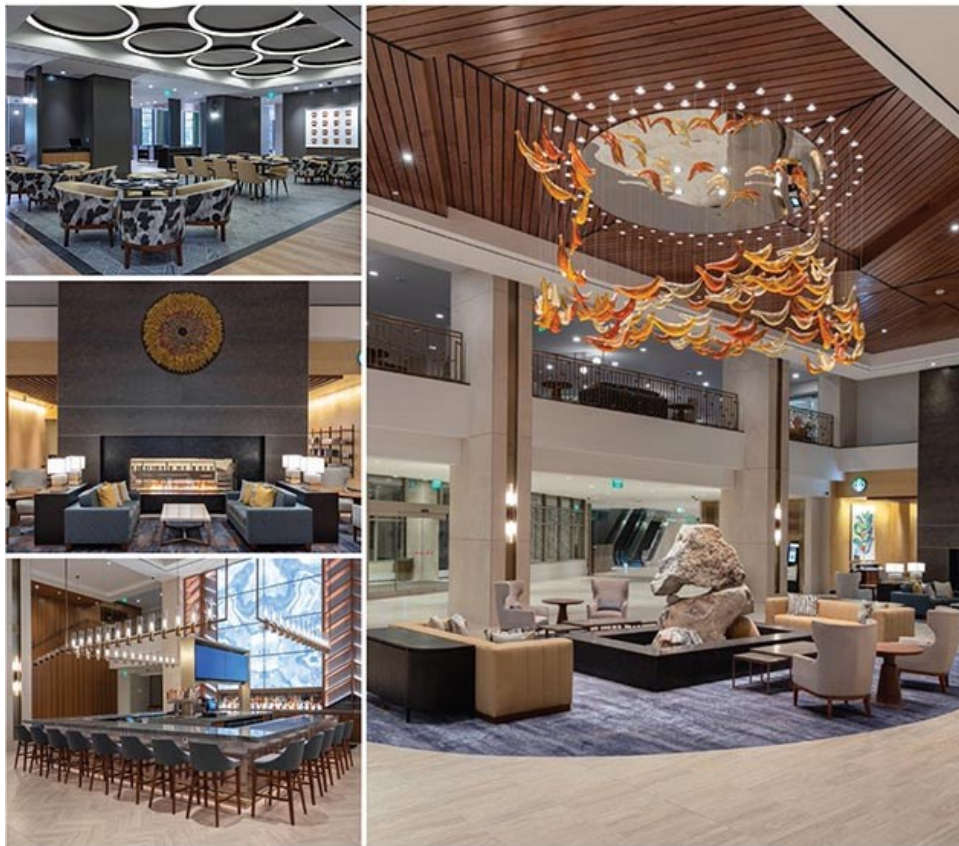
BY ASSOCIATION

The below educational content of this edition of *Success by Association Live* is sponsored by Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort.



Harrah's
CHEROKEE
CASINO RESORT

SPACES DESIGNED
TO MAKE AN IMPACT



CaesarsMeansBusiness.com | 855-633-8238



Educational Article

Give More of Your Members the Opportunity to Experience the Most Transformative Membership Benefit

Deirdre Reid, CAE

February 1, 2023

SHARE THIS CONTENT



Click [here](#) to listen to the article instead!



MORE...

Give More of Your Members the Opportunity to Experience the Most Transformative Membership Benefit

Work in associations long enough and you'll see pairs or groups of members become lifelong friends. At both my associations, I watched groups of women get to know each other as they volunteered together at events and then on committees. Years later, I still see them on Facebook getting together for long weekends—and I see them crushing it as successful executives and business owners. Association volunteering helped these women transform their personal and professional lives.

Retention isn't a concern when members have this kind of transformative association experience. But you need to offer the kind of volunteering opportunities that allow members to get their toes wet in your association. Most of them won't want to dive right into committee service. They're looking for an easier way to fit your association into their life.

Your members can't always take time away from work or home to attend meetings. Even if they could, many of them are wary of over-committing their time to committee responsibilities.

Is there a way to give busy members an opportunity to contribute to a greater cause, develop relationships, and experience the transformative benefits of membership? You bet. It's called microvolunteering.

Microvolunteering is ad hoc or episodic volunteering. Members volunteer when they wish without having to make a long-term or heavy commitment of time. Microvolunteering has a definite start and end. It's a way for members to integrate volunteering into their busy lives and contribute their talent, skills, and experience to their professional community without having to commit the time and energy usually required for committee and leadership service.

Associations have always offered microvolunteering to members—it just hasn't been called that. Think of the members who help out at the registration table, lead a table discussion, or write an article (hello!). But do you intentionally identify and market these microvolunteering opportunities to your members?

Examples of microvolunteering opportunities

You already have dozens of possible microvolunteering opportunities at your association.

Events

- Contact first-time attendees and arrange to meet them at events.
- Work at the registration desk.
- Take photos or videos during the event.
- Thank a short list of exhibitors for supporting the organization.

Membership

- Call new members to welcome them, find out about their goals, needs, and interests, and answer questions.
- Check in with new members three, six, and nine months into their membership.
- Help at new member orientation sessions.

Programs

- Participate in a community service project or career fair.
- Moderate or lead online discussions.
- Mentor, review resumes, do mock interviews, or act as a resource to young professionals.
- Provide ideas and feedback on existing and prospective programs, benefits, products, or services.

Marketing

- Help collect print or video member testimonials.
- Interview members (or non-members) for market research.
- Review marketing copy.

Advocacy

- Respond to calls to action on pending legislation.
- Visit, call, or email elected officials.
- Create or collect talking points about the impact of proposed legislation or regulations.

Communications

- Edit, proof, or provide feedback on articles and posts.
- Write a blog post or article.
- Review and test website or mobile app usability.
- Recommend posts to share in the organization's social media updates.
- Take over the social media feed for one day.

Education

- Take notes and/or write a recap of a session or webinar.
- Moderate a table discussion.
- Write reviews of books, videos, or other industry content.
- Report back from other industry conferences and meetings.

Ask your members how they want to help. Tap into the wisdom of the crowd to discover new ways for members to contribute their time and talents.

The benefits of microvolunteering for your members and association

Microvolunteering gives members the chance to meet new people, develop and practice new skills, and maybe even stretch their comfort zone. More importantly, it gives members the opportunity to contribute and make a difference. Contributing feels a lot better than sitting there and doing nothing. Don't underestimate the impact of microvolunteering on a member's mood, self-esteem, and sense of fulfillment.

The volunteer isn't the only one who benefits. Many microvolunteering tasks have traditionally been the responsibility of board directors, committee members, or staff. By delegating tasks to others, you can help alleviate the workload of leadership groups and prevent volunteer burnout. A larger pool of volunteer talent brings new and diverse perspectives, voices, and networks to your organization. Your interactions with members will no longer be limited to the usual suspects. You'll get a truer sense of member needs and interests.

Microvolunteering give members a taste of involvement. If they enjoy their experience, they may decide to take on a meatier task in the future or help out with a project that requires more of their time.

How to start microvolunteering at your association

Think about ways you can involve more members in the daily work of the association beyond traditional volunteering activities. Spend a few hours looking at all your programs, projects, and tasks. How could someone spend 30 minutes or an hour helping out? What could they do online? On the phone? In person?

Make this a committee exercise too. Committees often unintentionally hoard involvement opportunities by divvying up tasks among themselves. Ask every committee to create a list of microvolunteering opportunities. Regularly post these opportunities on your website and social media platforms. To make microvolunteering a part of your leadership culture, ask one of your officers or past presidents to take it on as a pet project.

If you've ever volunteered for an association, you can probably remember how you felt afterwards—the volunteer glow. You felt more connected to the association and the members you worked alongside. Give your members the opportunity to contribute in a way that fits into their lives. Give them the chance to experience the volunteer glow and the more long-lasting transformative effects of volunteering.

Deirdre Reid, CAE, is a freelance writer for association technology firms. The association community remains her professional home after a decade of overseeing membership, associate programs, marketing, publications, component relations, and more at the National Association of Home Builders and the California Building Industry Association.

If you would like to have one of your articles featured in *Success by Association Live* or have interest in sponsoring please contact Madi today at madi@aencnet.org.

Association Executives of North Carolina

Mailing Address: 514 Daniels St., PMB #352, Raleigh NC 27605

Phone: 919.848.8255 | Fax: 919.848.8525

