

Blueprint for Success

Chapter resources help volunteer leaders achieve their goals

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I have always believed that our Chapters are the heart of the IRWA. This is where most of our members realize the value of being a member. And getting involved can really take that value to a new level.

Although leading a Chapter, Committee or Region may sound like a daunting task, it can be very rewarding both professionally and personally. Yet, I understand how many of our volunteers might feel a little intimidated as they step into their new roles. If you find yourself asking how you got into this new role, how you will find the time or how you will learn what's needed to carry out your responsibilities, please know that you are not alone. All of us want you to succeed!

In June, our leadership will transition as we install new officers at the Annual Conference. That means now is the time to start preparing for your new leadership role. Let's focus on the Chapter level and on our incoming Chapter Presidents. Are you ready to lead?

Goal Setting

As an incoming Chapter President, have you thought about what you hope to accomplish during your term? A strong leader will set goals

and priorities and then develop plans to achieve them. For example, do you want to grow your membership base? If so, it's important to establish a target number of how many new recruits you hope to add to your current membership so that you can monitor your progress. If you want to increase meeting attendance, determine by how much. Would you like to see more members taking IRWA courses or attaining their credentials? Outlining the number of courses you want to present, which courses are needed and how many attendees you hope to attract will help you put your plan into action.

These are just some examples of targets that you can easily set. I encourage you to set three to five goals. The key here is not to wait until you are Chapter President to begin your planning. Once established, your team can develop action plans to help you achieve them. Remember to revisit your goals, targets and action plans at every board meeting. This will be your blueprint to success!

Your Team

Strong Chapters are comprised of strong teams where everyone is working toward common goals. Some members of your team are elected, but many positions are appointed and serve at the request of the Chapter President. Now is the time to address some really tough questions: Do

you have well functioning committees? Do your current committee leaders understand their roles and responsibilities? Are there too many committees? Should the existing Committee Chairs continue serving or is it time for a change? If any of them have evolved to a committee of one, it may be time for some new recruits. Because education and membership are vital to IRWA's growth, I believe the core positions are the Chairs of the Membership Committee, the Professional Development Committee and the Education Committee.

Know Your Resources and Use Them

You are not alone in your leadership journey! I encourage you to build a close working relationship with your Region leadership and your dedicated staff support. Talk to them, ask for their help and listen to their advice.

Get to know your Region Chairs and Vice Chairs. They offer a wealth of information and support. They are familiar with each Chapter within their Region and can share best practices and help guide you throughout the year. Region Chairs are also your elected members on the International Governing Council and help IRWA with strategic direction and in the development of programs and policies



IRWA Field Operations staff: Vice President Daniel Stekol supports Regions 1 and 9. Tim Drennan supports Regions 2,3,4,5 and 6, while Jaime Rose Matthews supports Regions 7, 8 and 10.

for all members. And Region Vice Chairs are your direct link for help with education planning.

I encourage you to connect with your IRWA Field Operations support person. They are ready to help you navigate complex issues, solve new challenges and even just brainstorm ideas. If you want to discuss the best

way to conduct a membership campaign, establish measurable chapter goals or find a way to work with a major employer, they have extensive experience and a variety of resources and tools to support your efforts.

Another major resource is the IRWA website. Did you know there is a Leadership Resources section? It is packed with tools you can use, including role descriptions for Chapter leadership positions, model Chapter bylaws, Chapter statistics and so much more. Check out a series of 11 short Leadership Institute videos that can help you with identifying and recruiting volunteers, running an effective meeting and becoming a top-performing Chapter. These resources are all available at your fingertips!

Starting out at the Chapter level, I can tell you that my time as a volunteer leader has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I am so glad that someone came up to me and asked me to serve! As you prepare for your next leadership role, I challenge you to try something new. The only thing to fear is that of standing still. If you divide the workload and everyone is involved, you will accomplish more and everyone will feel a sense of pride in a job well done. And if you take advantage of your available resources, I have no doubt that you will be successful. 🌟



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