



The Virtual Membership Engagement Playbook

By: Virtual Walden Chapter

Online Engagement

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has been a hot topic on everyone's mind. Businesses and organizations around the globe closed doors, canceled events, and are now looking for ways to engage customers and members online. The Virtual Walden Chapter is the first online Fulbright Association chapter. We created this virtual membership engagement guide to help other chapters develop an online engagement strategy.

Valuable Touchpoints Matter

Frequent communication matters when it has a purpose and value. Before you go cold turkey and switch to full-time online engagement, you should define your purpose, understand your audience, and determine how online engagement fits into the organization's overall communications and membership engagement strategy. Virtual communication absent of purpose and value results in members unsubscribing from your communications channels. Your strategy should be targeted and data informed.

The Virtual Playbook

1. Leverage Social Media

Building an online community is difficult without a designated location to engage members. The golden rule for digital engagement is developing an online community on a platform your members are already using. Engaging members on platforms they regularly use removes the need to download new apps and allows them to connect with the organization in a familiar space. Take a poll to determine which social media platforms members have and where they prefer to engage with your organization.

Tips: Use a popular social media platform as the online gathering space for your members. E.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are popular options.

2. Convert Face-to-Face Gatherings to Virtual Events

With so many digital communication tools to choose from, you don't need to cancel your in-person events. Create a virtual experience by using an online meeting application with video conferencing capabilities. Members will encounter face-to-face engagement in a controlled online environment.

Tips: Use a free online meeting space to save money. E.g. Freeconferencecall.com, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, AdobeConnect, Webex, and Skype have free and paid meeting space options.

3. Create a Content Calendar

People join online communities for information and to network. Provide enough variation to pique the interest of all your members. People want news, but they also want to have fun engaging with members. Create a content calendar to help your page stay robust. Post content regularly. Pose questions, create social media challenges, spotlight members, and share other people's content.

Tips: Develop a calendar using trending content themes and stick to the routine to develop followers. E.g. Motivational Mondays, Trivia Challenge Tuesdays, Membership Spotlight Wednesdays, Throwback Thursdays, Follow Me Back Fridays.

4. Track Metrics

It takes time to develop a virtual engagement habit. The more frequent the engagement, the more traction and response you gain from the online community. Don't reinvent the wheel. Piggybacking and imitating trending themes will boost engagement performance. Track how many clicks, comments, likes, shares, and responses your content is attracting.

Tips: Trending ideas gain traction. E.g. Photo Challenge, Virtual Happy Hours, Masterclass Webinars with Experts, and Virtual Roundtable Discussions

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