

Learning Pod Notes



Potpourri of Concepts and New Ideas

Sponsors

We don't do sponsors for our meetings. Currently what they get is listed on their website – the benefit of the fact that whenever anyone signs up for a session, they're directed to the website, advertised on a slide at events. They're working on what to do. They are looking for ways to benefit their sponsors.

They get 2-3 minutes to speak at beginning of dinner meetings. They get a couple tickets to end of year party, etc. They take sponsorships in kind, typically from a bank hosting a holiday party, etc. Sponsor benefits for various levels posted on their website. Sometimes they split sponsorship.

Only 65 active members. They've never done sponsorships.

Boston EPC - large council. 750. Sponsorship prospectus is on website. Even small councils should look at large council's sponsorship.

We have 65 members or so. Instead of concentrating on revenue, we concentrate on expense. We use sponsorship for one of the banks. If you let us use your facilities, they put them on their sponsor list – link to website, a quick talk prior to general members meeting. They don't have expenses for facilities, so now they're accruing a lot of revenue.

There are some really large councils out there...there are large pockets of money and wealth in some councils. His thought is that these large councils have very smart people writing articles and everything else. Could a larger council help support the smaller councils with sharing expenses for a speaker?

Speakers Bureau has speakers at no charge. She's participated in some meetings for smaller councils. Their outreach committee is going out to all these other councils, looking at their programs, and looking at synergies with other organizations, which gives them the opportunity to cross-market. There are also the webinars available for councils. Get people from the community with knowledge about the webinar, and create a program.

Programming

The more technical it gets, the more it turns other groups off, especially if it's for a particular discipline. The important thing is that the presenter tries to apply it to the members, rather than just one discipline.

Case study is a good format with two emcees. Whoever we have, we want a lot of humor and personality.

We have a smaller breakfast roundtable for a specific subject, then we have our regular luncheons (6-7), of which 3 are co-sponsored (financial service professionals, local community foundation, and a hospital). We get website advertisers that sign on for the year – low key and no solicitation.

Annual meeting – present new board and the newly elected president, etc. and then there's a headline speaker that presents at the event. Headline speakers are costing more and more money these days. It's an emerging trend for us – the webinars. 20-25 people (of 145 members) come for the brown bag series, highlighting one of the webinars from NAEPC. Fulfills the need of a headline speaker.

We have country club meetings for dinner – one a month. 7-8 months out of the year. \$200 membership annually, each dinner is \$60 with a full sit-down dinner, cocktails, and an hour-long presentation for CLE, etc. Thinking about going to higher caliber speakers (we usually pool speakers from the community). Do many people do the dinner meeting format?

Lunch doesn't work for us. We do dinners. Dinner meeting presenters are more often national type speakers. We also do four roundtables and get 50-75 people to show – and only there can we have locals from the community speak, but can't promote their own services.

There's not a great way to share the different programs that are successful. How can NAEPC help become a clearinghouse of great topics?

We put in place an identification system. Tracks and color-coding. This is based on expectations – so attendees know it's a technical versus fundamental topic. Breakfast or lunch meetings, pure networking meetings are at night or after 5pm.

When it comes to partnering with other organizations, we just put in place a procedure – here are the criteria, etc., which helps create better continuity.

We will do joint events with other councils.

Membership

At NAEPC it doesn't necessarily align with the councils and their definition of membership. NAEPC now accepts 12 different designations as qualifiers for the AEP® designation. Boston also includes MBA and many more categories. There has to be a connection to estate planning. Membership is all done online, and you have to prove that there's some involvement in estate planning.

Great value in having ancillary members. Some of them have turned out to be the most active members.

We only have 5 designations, and there's been a lot of push back to widen it.

Struggling with membership quotas, and designations right now. Trust Officer is one of their categories. Hard to find TO's.

Credentials versus value added.

If business development guy is gathering assets and really doesn't work in a holistic collaborative way, some councils wouldn't let them in, but if they write their application about how they are working in a way with a holistic team, they would let them in. (Boston EPC)

The councils are all so different with different classifications and who they accept. Why is there a concern in terms of limiting the certifications of those that come in?

There's a fear that they will be trying to solicit business, when the mission of the council is to network and educate and share information.

NAEPC has stringent requirements for the AEP® designation, but does not apply these to councils and their membership requirements.

We did, but more recently we opened it up to 12 different certifications. But it's still more strict than some other councils.

Wealth management – if someone looks at your council, if they see 50% wealth management, does that turn others away?

We opened it up to include more charitable professionals, family office people (administrative), property and casualty insurance – people still have to work in estate planning.

Our biggest supporter of our programs is a jewelry appraiser – anyone who touches the estate planning world, we accept in our membership. We've gotten a broader base of presenters at our meetings. Almost every speaker in our sessions, because the size of the group is getting larger, they offer to come at no charge.

We don't really limit based on credentials: it's a self-selecting association. Those that don't belong, don't really want to join anyway.

Expanding the membership makes programming difficult.

It should always be collaborative. Problem is that in every industry, there's always ego.

If you don't define estate planning overall – what is the point and goal – then it's hard to answer all the other questions. Getting more members, sponsorship, etc.

Our goal is to not get more members. We want to not lose members. We have natural attrition, of course, but we've been sustainable at this number for the last 8-9 years.

EPC is the only multi-disciplinary organization for people to get involved in. Make the committees fun, with a budget, with food. A little socialization helps.

Encouraged new young members to get on a committee right away.