**How to build a chapter leadership pipeline**

How many of you are first time presidents? How many of you are first time treasurers? Chapters. How many of you have held you position for more than one term? Regardless of the answers, chapters still need to build a pipeline for volunteer leaders or what is referred to in the Leadership Manual, **Passing the Torch under chapter management section**.

You can’t just expect new chapter leaders to emerge miraculously year after year—although sometimes they do. As Chapter leaders you need a method to identify and prepare members for leadership positions, so you don’t over-work and recycle the few qualified leaders you’ve got. Because when those leaders have had enough, you’ll end up with mediocre leaders or no leaders at all with chapters disbanding and having to do transfer paperwork.

A chapter leadership pipeline pulls members up from a pool of volunteers and places them into leadership positions—chapter officers, directors, and committee chairs and members. But before you build the leadership pipeline, you first must fill up your pool of volunteers.

#### RETHINK AND REDEFINE CHAPTER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

If you have trouble recruiting volunteer leaders, it may have something to do with the leadership job. Time is now our most valuable asset because there’s so much more to do with our time. Today’s members aren’t always as willing (or able) to dedicate as much time to IPSSA as they were in the past. Don’t use the model, that is the way we have always done it. If that is the case, and it is working, then Congrats! You already have your leadership pipeline.

Do your leadership positions demand too much of a member’s time? If that’s the case, you’ll end up with the martyr or superhero chapter leaders. You want leaders—members who will delegate tasks and share opportunities to contribute with others—not doers. Don’t blame outside influences for the challenges. Refer to IPSSA bylaws and standing rules, for guidance. IPSSA National membership requirements often times are less stringent than chapters. The chapters have the authority to govern their chapters in accordance with IPSSA’s code of conduct, bylaws and standing rules. As a chapter leader try doing this:

* Speak with current and past leaders about responsibilities that could be shared or delegated to other positions. It is not a one-size fits all.
* Find out what type of support would have made their leadership job easier.
* Could they have benefited from any particular training or assistance?

Survey your membership, perhaps you’ll see the need for new leadership positions or the creation of an entirely new group of volunteers who agree to be on call to temporarily assist leaders. Don’t count them out because they can’t commit all the way.

* Make sure each chapter leadership position has an updated, complete position description.
* Define responsibilities and set expectations, including the time commitment.
* Describe the skills or experience required.
* Don’t forget to include the benefits of volunteering for that position.

**See roles defined as a chapter officer for examples**.

#### CREATE A CHAPTER LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

Building a chapter leadership pipeline is a proactive initiative. Past and present leaders must constantly search for and develop their immediate and future successors.

**DISCOVER HIDDEN LEADERS**

During the new member onboarding, find out if members are or have been leaders for other organizations, for example, HOAs, charities, youth groups, church, sports, or other community groups. Someone whose schedule is heavily committed to another organization may not have time for your chapter right now but keep their name on a list for the future.

At a chapter meeting, ask around the room, what are you passionate about, engaging members, education and/ or food and networking. Maybe they have an interest in the financial health of the chapter? Tap into their area of strengths and interests. Spin those interests into positions of leadership or if necessary, create new roles to suit the volunteer. This is your chapter - design it.

Talk to existing and past board and committee members about members they would recommend for leadership or committee positions.

Find out who’s highly trusted in the member community by polling members to find out whom they respect.

* Whom do they go to for advice?
* Whose opinion do they value?
* Whom would they trust with the leadership of their chapter?

This “member intel” is helpful to staff at National who may find themselves in the position of helping chapters recruit new leaders.

When you approach members on this list about taking on a leadership role, emphasize the endorsements they received from their peers. Because it’s human nature to want to live up to the expectations of our peers, they may be more easily persuaded to help out.

**SEND OUT CHAPTER LEADERSHIP SCOUTS**

College and professional sports teams have their scouts, your leadership teams need their scouts too. The leadership scout’s job is to identify members who could be good prospects for committees or other leadership groups. It’s a good job for anyone who meets or talks with a lot of members, or has a wide professional network, for example, past chapter leaders, committee chairs and members, and staff.

Even if the members your scouts identify are not yet qualified for board or committee service, they may be interested in getting involved in a lesser way. For example, they could be a good fit for an advisory group, task force, or an ad hoc or microvolunteering role to start.

#### DEVELOP A CHAPTER LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

Chapters may not have the resources or bandwidth to develop an effective leadership training program on their own, utilize IPSSA National that is why we are here. Talk with your region director about leadership training.

National is better positioned to provide training resources to chapters. National staff can also spot good resources or practices used by one chapter and share them with the rest of the chapter network.

Leadership training can be provided via a mix of:

* In-person sessions by a past or present leader
* Take a potential leader to lunch, explain the position. Get them excited, remember it should not be a chore. If you seem insincere through the conversation, they won’t want to engage in volunteer leadership.
* Live or on-demand webinars and videos on leadership training through IPSSA National.
* Buddy or mentor programs

**Another option:** recruit a group of leadership apprentices who help chapter leaders with short-term tasks. These emerging leaders have the opportunity to get involved at a deeper level without having to take on a formal role and responsibility.