

Power of Guidelines vs Deadlines: Tips for Creating Powerful Leadership Resource Portals

“Volunteers are busy. We know that. So, let’s leverage technology to make their job easier. In the process, we’ll make staff job easier and put you in the role of guiding not nagging about deadlines.”

A chapter leader portal described its purpose in a statement:
“AKA THINGS EDs AND VOLUNTEERS DIG THROUGH INBOXES FOR”

A Robust Leadership Resource Portal Check List

- Key resources your chapters must have to be in compliance and successful
- Models, templates and tip sheets that provide examples and guides
- Quick resources in key areas
- Strong search engine to make locating resources and content easy (and directive)
- Online community to allow for sharing, coaching and idea-swapping
- Driven by a decision tree to help volunteers navigate the resources easily
- Easy to update and build onto
- Tied into a robust leadership development program that includes a volunteer career pathway, training and development.

We love the mantra “forever beta” and believe it should be applied to resource portals!

How to Build a Portal

Let the portal become a collaboration of volunteers and staff, refreshing content and shifting focus as priorities change.

1. **Review your volunteers’ training/resource needs**, including cataloging current materials and resources. To clearly identify needs, consider a poll to volunteers and assembling a workgroup of component leaders.



2. **Identify gaps** in available resources and identify potential sources.
3. **Create a content outline and portal map.** One rule of thumb for mapping the content *is follow the volunteer* – not your HQ staff. Ask
 - a. How does your volunteer organize the work of the chapter/component?
 - b. What do they need most frequently?
 - c. What questions are they asking of you?
4. **Initiate a rolling launch to provide volunteers to test, kick the tires, and provide feedback and suggestions.** We recommend forming this ad-hoc group. Initially, we will suggest you actively reach out and invite leaders. The group can then convert into a community to provide ongoing feedback and ideas (see ASAE’s Collaboration Site Feedback group as a model).

You’ve Built it, Will they come?

Here are 5 sure-fire ways to boost volunteer engagement in your portal

- **Community Manager (staff!).** Assign a staff member whose role is the care and feeding of the portal. This includes updating content on a regular basis, encouraging leaders to share and log-on, and addressing issues that come up quickly.
- **The Carrot.** Think gamification. How can you reward chapters for engaging in the portal and sharing? Give points for uploads that a chapter can redeem for a free member webinar, financial support to attend a leadership training, etc.
- **Ambassadors.** Consider Moderators who work to facilitate community knowledge sharing and assist with delivering members with the best value for their participation and Super Fans who participate at an extremely high level for their own pleasure or purpose. (Check out [5 Steps to Build a Super Fan Program.](#))

Sample Outline

Leadership

- General administration
- Leadership development
- Leadership styles
- Mobilizing volunteers
- Electing chapter officers

Planning

- Plan an education program
- Plan a social, networking event
- Plan a CE program

Chapter Finances

- Financial management
- Securing funding through sponsorship or strategic partnerships

Membership

- Growing membership
- Engaging current members

Communications

- Promoting Chapter and/or events
- Chapter Graphic Standards
- Website
- E-letters
- Social media



- **Strong Volunteer Onboarding.** Take new volunteers (and returning) on a tour. When they ask for a resource, screen share to show them how to find it, have an available FAQ and short video on the portal.
- **User-friendly?** Check how easy it is log-on, upload, download, to find resources. Consider building it around frequently asked questions (see example).

Chapter Leaders Table of Contents

If you're a **first-time volunteer leader** or **new to chapter leadership** and need to know where to start, a great place to begin is with the information on **annual planning**. If you're a **seasoned chapter volunteer** and looking for specific resources or answers, view our list of frequently used items. Looking to **start a chapter**? Review the **information** we've provided on how to get started.

As a chapter officer, I need to:

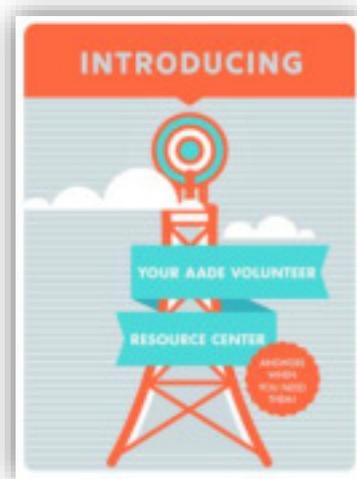
- Complete my chapter's **annual report**
- Schedule a **conference call**
- Access **email templates**
- Create an effective **project plan**
- Manage **member records**
- Find **sponsors**
- Promote my chapter and/or my chapter's event
- Review the ASPEN Chapter Graphic Standards
- Update my chapter's **bylaws**
- Post questions, share documents, and start discussions in the Chapter Leaders Only Community in ASPENet (review the Getting Started section to learn how)
- Set up **online registration** with ASPEN for my chapter's event (Please provide your chapter name, the event date, and pricing information)

As a chapter officer, I need to learn more about:

- **Tax-Exempt Status**

Tapping Technology

- Build into your online community
- Tap stand-alone options such as [Boardable](#)
- Build a resource section into your website
- Leverage your LMS for consistent orientation & training
- Use a combination of tools, e.g. Dropbox with LinkedIn or Facebook Group; Google Drive



Need Help? We're here! Let Mariner help you evaluate options, build a dashboard or navigate how to help chapters use and flourish tapping into your dashboard.

