



CBS 2021 // REGIONAL BREAKOUT: CANADA // 04.16.21

1. What have been your greatest challenges through the pandemic?

- Membership retention
- Reaching members and not knowing who is furloughed – not having contact information and being able to reach everyone
 - Biggest challenge was being able to get a hold of members. SO many laid off.
- Lot of people furloughed; those kept on, orgs chose not to pay for memberships; hours cut drastically
- Members who are furloughed do not necessarily see our newsletters or MPI info that lets them know there is financial assistance
- And for those on reduced hours or job sharing the conversations we intermittent do to everyone having different scheduling and priorities
- People balancing home life and WFH has been a challenge; many dropped off in trying to make that balance; lack of funds in paying for membership
- Thanks to Foundation, IMEX and DT, really helped
- Biggest drop off was supplier
- Messaging from chapter, “Make sure your profile is updated”
 - Add personal cell phones and email addresses
 - Significant number who do not want to put personal details
- Social media helped in contacting displaced members; those without contact information; but there was a significant gap in time, because it was so sudden
 - Forced to be put in this position and it caused improvement in that area
 - Socials for sure helps. Its those members that don't use it regularly (or at all) that are the biggest gap
 - Showcasing the value of membership in our socials is also important now - to get members back when they can rejoin
- Significant emotional toll; seeing so many colleagues furloughed, and not being able to do anything about it
- Always a challenge in communicating with members

2. What strategies did you come up with to overcome those challenges?

- Toronto chapter developed FB Group and 204 members actively engaged; was open to anyone in the industry

- Posts that highlighted members; resulted in higher engagement; “member champions” – still a member and why...”inspiring hope”
- Solid way to connect people and give them hope
- Town Hall was conducted to help answer questions
- At the beginning of COVID we held weekly "wine Wednesdays", to stay connected. I love the idea of asking "Why are you still a member?"
 - Relationships continued with suppliers to get leads; now suppliers reaching out to them to be a part of the chapter
 - Created new opportunities in different sizes (advertising for \$100 up to strategic partners for events)
 - Transitioning into the digital space and supporting suppliers; working within their budgets
 - Ask for their budget and then provide the most value
- Created “MPI Toronto Marketplace” sponsorship
 - Virtual marketplace for advertisers to engage
 - Created a calendar
- Some of us DMO reps got some provincial funding so we were able to jump back in (in a smaller way) with sponsor \$ for unique opportunities
- Rolled over key sponsors to provide extra value, even if they’re not active
- Responsive with the sponsorships; began having 1:1 conversations to see what they had to spend, what they needed in exposure
 - Created new opportunities based on that
 - Evaluate value proposition
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3. What are the best practices YOU think will move Chapters forward as we recover from the pandemic?

- Showcase ROI and assess how that’s different for each member
- Know and respond to the member needs at a high level
- Locally, pull it back and focus on our own communities as opposed to Global...your own backyards
 - Focused on “customer care calls”; not just members up for renewal or new members, but ALL members
 - Try to contact every member over the course of two months
 - Personal and professional conversations, to focus on them as an individual
- Making the emotional connection
 - Lunch Bunch
 - Breakfast Club
 - Coffee Chats - now we are doing monthly free drop in zooms
- Focused on advocacy; getting everyone together
- BC has also started zoom onboarding. We started this with Capilano University with 46 students. It was a great success, and gives a local flavour to the Membership 101
- Expand on the ability to join committees as they come into the Chapter
- Chairs have gotten to know Committee members

BONUS: Membership value provided at the chapter level

- What the value is to them and why they're a member
 - Side conversations that take place at a reception
 - Assess where they're at in their current state (what's on their plate)
 - Easier success when we see that people are looking to get involved, specifically through volunteering, because they want connections
 - Getting that person to the right committee (based on time and skills sought to be gained)
 - Match making to ensure their current situation matches needs