

SOS Submission Form

Chapter Name: Madison Area Chapter (MAC)

Chapter Membership Size Medium (100-299)

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Chapter Board Position: VP-Membership

Chapter Website URL: <https://astd-swc.wildapricot.org/>

Submission Title: Getting to Know ATD-MAC & Special Thank You Mailing Surprise!

Submission Description:

As we all know, 2020 has seen a dramatic shift for all of us in all we do, including significant challenges and opportunities to interact with our membership. Due to the pandemic, the face-to-face events were replaced by virtual offerings, yet we wanted to remind our entire chapter membership that we are still here.

As a board, we made the decision to recognize our members during the month of September 2020 with an envelope of surprises promoting our chapter and thanking our members for their continued support.

"During these unprecedented times, we want our ATD-MAC family to know that we are here for you" was the intro on the printed thank you card we sent all of our members.

Along with this thank you card designed by a board member and professionally printed, we also included a flyer explaining a new all access membership level; requesting submissions from our members for 2021 programming if interested in presenting or having suggestions for topics as fall is when we collect and review RFPs to plan next year's programming. Our flyer also included all of the ways to connect with our chapter by promoting our website resources and blog along with our social media addresses.

The mailer also included a couple more surprises which filled the padded envelopes that they actually walked out to their mailbox to retrieve. No electronic mail for these gifts, but good old fashioned postal mail! A notepad and pen shouted out ATD-Madison.

All of our members received the thank you card, flyer, pen and notepad. Our charter members of our new all access membership level also received a small denomination gift card for take out from a popular restaurant chain, Culvers, which also happens to have been founded in the Madison area.

In preparing the envelopes to mail, our board had the opportunity on a nice warm evening to meet at a local park to stuff envelopes. This was the first time the board had been together in person since our January State of the Chapter Meeting and we were able to safely do so outside by socially distancing with masks on as we spread out on park picnic tables to create an assembly line of envelope stuffing. Plus, we did some strategic planning discussions while we prepared the envelopes.

Need(s) Addressed? Please be specific. Due to isolation many feel with the pandemic, we wanted to let our membership know ATD-MAC is still here for them for their training and development and networking needs. While we can't meet in person, we still have virtual events going on and are planning for next year to make sure our members knew virtual programming is still happening and will continue until its safe for us to be back in person meeting down the road.

Member appreciation week tied to our plan as well since we wanted to provide these small gifts and provide thanks and recognition to our membership, with the extra special recognition of the gift card to our members who joined the new membership level as charter all access members.

What is your chapter's mission?

"We believe in creating a community that works better. One that inspires and empowers professionals to develop themselves and others in the workplace."

How does this effort align with your chapter's mission? (Please provide specific examples)

The mailing reminded our members we are here for their professional development with a variety of ways to connect with us through our website and social media channels so they know how to contact us and we let them know it was planning time for next year's programming asking for their suggestions and RFP submissions.

ATD's mission is to "empower professionals to develop talent in the workplace". How does this submission align with ATD's mission? Please provide specific examples.

As a network of ATD members and specifically for our chapter, our local members get the opportunity to know each other as training professionals and learn from each through events and sharing resources and making connections through our social media channels and website. Training professionals share ideas and learn from each others as peers from a variety of industries and know they can trust the support they will receive from their fellow members as an ATD community.

Target Audience: (Who will benefit/has benefited from this effort?)

All of our members benefited as all received the mailing. Plus our new all access membership level charter members received the extra thank you gift card.

Costs/Resources Used: (Please include any details regarding use of resources including monetary, donations, contributions, volunteer hours, people resources, etc. and how you went about getting these resources)

As a board we reviewed our budget considering how the shift from in-person events to virtual meant that the small monthly budgeted amount we had for providing snacks at meetings throughout the year could be reallocated to purchase some inexpensive ATD-MAC branded gifts, plus we had some additional funds available for this mailing effort to recognize member appreciation week. The total cost for postage, gift cards, and printing costs associated with the notepads, pens, envelopes was around \$1200. The board worked on the envelope stuffing and turned that into an opportunity to discuss next year's planning while we worked as an added benefit.

How did you implement: (please give a brief description) We mailed envelopes to all members back in September coinciding with member appreciation. Since then we have been individually mailing packages to additional new members as they join. We monitor the automated email notification of new members, then address an envelope to mail as we receive or on a monthly basis ongoing. We had enough supplies to prepare all the envelopes at our socially distanced board meeting so the VP-Membership monitors new memberships and mails one of the envelopes with a signed thank you personally welcoming the new member.

What were the outcomes: (Please include hard data regarding financial gains, membership increases, target audience satisfaction levels, publicity for the chapter or for the profession, etc.) Publicity for our website and social media addresses along with some interest in submitting RFPs for next year. Plus reminding our members of our website and that we are still here with virtual events hopefully resulted in members checking out our website and seeing our upcoming programming, if they hadn't been watching their emails.

Lessons Learned: (hints and tips for other chapters who may be considering a similar effort) The only challenge was realizing once we had pulled a report/roster from Wild Apricot to be able to do a mail merge for address labels, we discovered several members had not provided a home address and we wondered if several are working remote so they may not receive their mail until they return to the office. Plus for a few members we had incomplete or missing addresses/contact information. In future we decided we would somehow remind or entice our members to update their profile so if we do again we have more members with complete mailing address info. One other suggestion if you are concerned about mailing costs or reducing costs, consider what your gifts will be. By us providing a ball point pen with everything else in the envelope being paper, we needed a padded envelope to protect the pen which increased cost of envelopes and increased mailing rate.

Please list the specific ATD chapter resources that helped guide you in the process of completing this best practice (e.g. people, documents, policies, by-laws, etc.): Board staff did the work which included designing the artwork and layout for thank you card and flyer; sending out to a professional printer for printing and pick-up; ordering Culvers gift cards online; purchasing padded mailing envelopes and address labels; purchasing notepads and pens with ATD-MAC logo; stuffing envelopes; online postage and delivering bulk envelopes to post office for initial mailing. Ongoing we monitor new members that have joined since September's mass mailing and have monthly run to post office for mailing a small number each month and small additional postage costs.

Please attach any documents that help support this submission: (additional documents and documents over 2MB should be sent to sos@td.org) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9522492364>

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How did you become familiar with the Sharing Our Success (SOS) program?

Saw or heard of SOS from another Chapter Leader

Would you be willing to present on this submission at the ATD Chapter Leaders Conference (ALC)? *Request for Proposals (RFPs) open in May of each year at td.org/alc. Selected session facilitators receive complimentary registration.

Yes