

## SOS Submission Form

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**Chapter Name:** ATD Nashville

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**Chapter Membership Size** Medium (100-299)

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**Contact Person for This Submission:** Luke Benfield

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**Email Address:** luke.benfield@gmail.com

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**Phone Number:** (239) 777-1433

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**Chapter Board Position:** President-Elect

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**Chapter Website URL:** <https://atdnashville.org/>

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**Submission Title:** Supporting Professionals In Transition During a Pandemic

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**Submission Description:** In ATD Nashville, we wanted to do more to support area professionals that have found themselves in transition due to the pandemic. We developed a three-pronged approach. First, the board voted to create a free 3-month interim membership - non-members can join for free as a trial, lapsed members can rejoin the chapter, and current members can extend their membership. Second, we created a Virtual Forum series that is hosted once per month and focuses on talent development challenges due to the pandemic such as converting classroom training to virtual, home office set up, etc. These programs are free for members and the program is based on organic discussion. Lastly, and most importantly, we have created a Virtual Coffee Chat series that has been wildly successful. These morning programs are offered twice per month and are free to anyone who registers. The programming is focused on aspects of job searches, challenges of suddenly finding yourself in transition, and personal branding. Thus far, we have covered topics such as virtual interviewing, resume feedback, self-care, and more. With all of our virtual programming, we have experienced an average increase in participation from about 30/month to 80/month. Our membership numbers have remained stable, and we have been able to recruit three board members, and two additional volunteers through all our virtual programming efforts.

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**Need(s) Addressed? Please be specific.** In ATD Nashville, we wanted to do more to support area professionals that have found themselves in transition due to the pandemic.

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**What is your chapter's mission?** "Empower professionals to develop knowledge and skills successfully." Our Vision is "To create a Nashville-area community that works better."

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

The activities directly strengthen support of our mission and vision.

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**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.**

The activities directly strengthen support of our mission and vision.

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

Members and area TD professionals in transition.

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**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)**

No new expenses. Time was the only additional resource to provide hosts and producers for all our programming.

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**How did you implement: (please give a brief description)**

First: We developed a three-pronged approach. First, the board voted to create a free 3-month interim membership - non-members can join for free as a trial, lapsed members can rejoin the chapter, and current members can extend their membership.

Second: We created a Virtual Forum series that is hosted once per month and focuses on talent development challenges due to the pandemic such as converting classroom training to virtual, home office set up, etc. These programs are free for members and the program is based on organic discussion.

Lastly: Most importantly, we have created a Virtual Coffee Chat series. These morning programs are offered twice per month and are free to anyone who registers. The programming is focused on aspects of job searches, challenges of suddenly finding yourself in transition, and personal branding. Thus far, we have covered topics such as virtual interviewing, resume feedback, self-care, and more.

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**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.)**

Outcomes

- With all of our virtual programming, we have experienced an average increase in participation from about 30/month to 80/month.
  - Our membership numbers have remained stable, and we have been able to recruit three board members, and two additional volunteers through all our virtual programming efforts.
  - We have had 10-20 people apply for and receive the free interim memberships
  - Pre-Covid, our monthly participant count hovered around 30/month. Now we are between 75-90/month.
  - We surpassed our entire 2019 participant count by the end of August 2020.
  - We were able to recruit 3 new board members and fill an anticipated vacancy for next year (4 board members total), and one volunteer producer for virtual programs through these efforts.
  - One of our lead facilitators of the Coffee Chat series not only joined the board, but also recently secured employment. She cites being part of the coffee chat series as being a key to that success.
  - Our total cost has been the cost of one Zoom Pro license which we had secured pre-COVID. We have completely recouped that cost from non-member registration fees from Virtual Forums and Virtual Chapter meetings.
  - Our local SHRM chapter heard about our Virtual Forums program and reached out to partner with us on a program. We are co-hosting a virtual forum on "Leading Virtually" later this month and expect a large attendance.
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**Lessons Learned: (hints and tips for other chapters who may be considering a similar effort)**

**Lessons Learned**

- Our membership was eager to participate in enhanced virtual programming.
- Our Coffee Chat series focused on job transitions has been wildly popular and we have had a lot of attendees participating in most sessions.
- The volunteers we recruited to help shape, drive, and host our virtual programming were a key to success.
- It was challenging for our VP of Programs to transition from managing 1 program/month to 4-5 programs/month. Recruiting more volunteers helped to alleviate that burden.
- Free programming and interim memberships did not hurt our finances, nor our numbers. Our active member count is now actually above where we were pre-COVID.
- Having a host and a producer for every session as well as a few basic discussion questions were crucial to our success.
- We created a virtual meeting checklist that we manage in Asana for each virtual event to ensure attendance is taken, dry runs are completed, and to make sure everyone involved is on the same page.
- We had to pivot very quickly due to COVID, so a lot of the programs started as wild ideas to create value for members and support area professionals that unexpectedly found themselves in transition. We had a month or two of iterations before we found a great rhythm.
- Virtual programs, especially like the Coffee Chats and Virtual Forums do not have to be these wildly professional and immersive experiences. Organic conversations with a facilitator and a few prompt questions can just as easily satisfy the needs to learn, network, and share experiences.

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**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.):**

None in particular.

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**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/9062295316>

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**additional supporting documents:**

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9062295317>

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**additional supporting documents:**

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9062295318>

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

Other:

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**If you selected "other", please explain your response.**

Found out about it during the open submission time around the ATD conference.

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**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](http://td.org/alc). Selected session facilitators receive complimentary registration.** Yes

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