

The Six Breakthrough Formulas Guide, Tips, and Tool Sheet

1. Go from Sponsor to Super-Sponsor

This breakthrough formula could just as well been labeled “partner to super-partner”. We believe that every partnership or sponsorship has the potential to be turned into something more.

What is the goal of a Super-sponsorship or Super-Partnership?

- Attract new members, retain existing members, and attract non-members to events
- Save money, make money, and attract more resources in general
- Gain visibility via more marketing or promotional opportunities
- Get closer to whatever goals you’ve set for your chapter... with the RIGHT super-sponsor

In short, the goals of the Super-Sponsorship or Super-Partnership are simply the goals and objectives that most ASTD Chapters share.

Short anecdote – the first super-sponsor for the Sacramento ASTD Chapter came in the form of a local college continuing education department. The CSUS College of Continuing Education (CCE) became a loose affiliate one year, a sponsor of our annual conference the next year, the principal sponsor and provider of our venue for the next year’s conference, and in 2013 became our super-sponsor. Actually, they chose the more refined title of “2013 Educational Partner” but to our chapter they are a “Super-Sponsor”.

What did the “Super-Sponsorship” provide for the sponsor and the ASTD chapter

ASTD Chapter	Sponsor/Partner
incredible venue that would have cost us several thousand dollars at a local hotel	A way to inexpensively reach out to many of the professional to whom they wish to sell programs
lots of expertise in conference planning	A “soft” means to market and promote programs
Increased visibility and marketing assistance	An easy way to pay for professional development for their stable of trainers, training managers, and developers

Keys to building the relationship

We didn’t dictate the terms of the agreement, but instead asked the following questions.

- If we created the “Ideal” partnership that gave you everything you wanted in a partnership, what would that partnership look like?
- What would you take away from the partnership or get more of, that you aren’t getting now?
- What might be happening less to make things easier or better for you?

We call this our “co-creation” approach after a quote and approach espoused by Brendon Burchard, who says, *“People support what they create, therefore, seek to co-create”*.

We approached this partner with an attitude of openness and a desire to build a partnership that was mutually beneficial. We sought to “co-create” a relationship that would deliver maximum value for both parties. But we knew it would succeed. Why?

Because we “co-created” a solution and “people support what they create!”

2. The Power of Annual Programs

If you aren't planning on rolling out your chapter programs on an annual basis, you are missing out on an opportunity to make a big impact on member attraction and retention.

Plan your programs annually – before the end of the calendar year.

Why? There are many, many benefits including:

- a) You won't get caught without a program if you start early,
- b) program ideas beget other ideas – so start early and watch the ideas fly, and
- c) if you are ready with a new slate of programs by December, you will be ready to post them in Jan.

Post your programs by January for the entire year and make this an integral part of your your January Annual Event. Even if you have little or no information detailed information about the programs, get the information posted. Why? What can this do for your chapter?

- a. This can boost enrollments to every program early. Take advantage of every event in the year to promote coming events. (Use a looping slide show at events to show what's coming next)
- b. Use the same slide show or versions on the web site and make it very visible.
 - a. *See Handout #2 - Annual Program Slide Show and Comments, for a great example*
- c. An annual program posted to the website attracts new members and sends a strong message to existing members. The message – This association is giving me serious value for my membership! This chapter is thinking ahead, they are innovative, they are working for me.

Borrow and trade with other ASTD Chapters. Reach out to other chapters for ideas or even to trade great speakers. What could be better to offer your members than a program that was well evaluated and received by another chapter. Many of our most successful programs come from other chapters, including our neighboring chapter in No. CA , the Mt. Diablo Chapter.

Even this can help... Use the word "ANNUAL"!

Leverage the value of the word or the concept "ANNUAL" in your program titles

What?

Yes, simply start using the word annual. Members LOVE annual events! They look forward to knowing there are annual events planned and promised by your chapter. Another surprise, your program director(s) will also love annual events. With four annual events per year, one third of program planning is done at the start of the program planning cycle. The challenge then is to keep these events fresh and vital by changing things up, but this is a small challenge compared to creating twelve or more new and untested events per year.

Form a small group or committee and look for ideas annually. Use the ideas above, but multiply them with the power of a dedicated and innovative committee.

What annual events are you doing? Here are some of ours in 2013 and the list continues to grow. *Again, Look at handout # 2 for more info on ALL our events in 2013.*

- Annual January "pizza day" and ASTD State of the Industry... designed to draw a big crown
- Annual Fundamentals for Trainers or Train-the-Trainer... twice in 2013, always sold out.
- June saw our first Learning and Development event using the new ASTD competency model
- October was Mindfulness: The New Workforce Competency (another topic from the world of positive psychology)

See hints, tips, and how each event fits our "masterplan" in handout 2. We have included a snapshot of each event and imbedded notes and information below every snapshot on every event of 2013.

3. The Lean Startup Method

A simplified guide for experimentation and growth

What is it?

The Lean Startup Method, is called the “Build, Measure, Learn Method” by some, and “validated learning” by others. It is a method that was first practiced and popularized in the silicon valley of California by technology startups. The method relies on iterative product development and releases rather than a long period of development before a final deployment.

To reduce the method to its simplest elements, it is a method for turning ideas into products or services in a short period of time, then measuring how customers respond, and then learning from the results whether to change direction or whether to keep moving in the same direction.

It is a process that encourages one to start small (with a minimum viable product or MVP), take small steps while introducing new changes or modifications, follow each step by a test (often by very small groups of users), and learn lessons from each step (via rigorous measurement). The goal is to continuously or iteratively learn. At the end of each short cycle you learn from the experiment and continue to move in the same direction, if the learning was positive, or pivot (change directions) if the learning indicated a misstep.

Why is it such a good fit for your ASTD Chapter?

- **It is a low cost method – which is appropriate for most ASTD Chapters.**
 - The method allows small inexpensive experiments around a variety of program efforts. New speakers, topics, and methods of delivery.
- **Learning is the goal, so it is ideally suited to an organization devoted to learning**
 - Go ahead, don't be afraid to take some risks and learn from them. No small child is going to be harmed! Don't go crazy and risk the chapter's bank account, but this is not your livelihood, nor will the chapter suffer irreparable harm if one of your iterative experiments forces you to “pivot”. Your members will appreciate the fact that new things are happening.
- **Our members (like most people) don't do a great job of “telling us what they want” in surveys or by other means. What they are good at (like most people) is showing us what they like or value.**
 - So once again, experiment, innovate, go out on a limb... the biggest risk is taking NO risk at all.

A few resources:

- Eric Ries' book, *The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*, published in September, 2011. This is the “bible” for new practitioners of the method, and the best place to start.
- <http://theleanstartup.com/> The website of Eric Ries and a goldmine of information
- <http://lean-startup.meetup.com/> Lean Startup “Meet-up” Groups exist all over the United States and the world. Tap into one of the meet-ups to learn more about how to use the process in your chapter or see the free tip below. Good luck!

Free Tip – An idea for a program in 2014 In addition to being a powerful new way to plan, learn, and develop new programs for your chapter, you might want to consider “The Lean Startup Method” as a program for your members. It is an ideal method for your independent training consultants to use as they develop products and their businesses. In addition, the method is increasingly being adopted by existing large corporations and public sector agencies.

4. The Partnership Potential

- **Are you partnering with other associations, companies, and educational institutions now?**
- **Are you convinced you have partnered with any or all the companies, agencies, or organizations that could add value to your chapter?**
- **Do you feel like you are maximizing the potential of all your existing partnerships?**

If you can answer yes to all the above questions, then you need go no further. The “partnership potential” offers advice on how you can identify potentially beneficial partnerships and then how to maximize the value of those partnerships, once you have secured them. The Sacramento ASTD Chapter has made an effort to build and expand our partnerships for the past four years, but frankly, we still have a long way to go.

The following are some partners or sponsors with whom we have sought to build relationships:

- Local SHRM chapter (Society of Human Resource Management)
- Local Organizational Development Chapter
- Local colleges or universities
- Local Chapter of Technical Writers
- An E-learning Group in State Government
- Local Chapter of the American Society of Association Executives

What can partnerships do for you?

Partnerships can reduce your workload if you partner effectively for one or two events per year. We recently partnered with our local SHRM Chapter for our large annual networking event. We did very little work, but had one of our largest networking events ever.

What else?

- Boost numbers at monthly events, special events, and networking events
- Save money by sharing costs with partners
- Add members or retain members by offering more than you could alone
- Appear bigger and more resource rich, by partnering

How can we go about developing or improving our partnerships?

Remember “co-creation” from page one of this document and ask yourself and your chapter some of the following questions?

- What are some of the issues or problems that we currently have, that might be solved or addressed by a partnership(s)?
- What organizations or associations share our interests?
- What organizations or associations share our members?
- What organizations or associations do something better than us, that we could profit by knowing, doing, or sharing with them?

5. Go Back to School

The “Association of Associations” Rich Resource Guide

What do we mean by “go back to school”?

We mean the following:

- You probably spent a long time getting your academic credentials to do whatever it is you do.
- You most likely spent additional time and money to become a good trainer, developer, designer or whatever segment of the training and development field you occupy.

But, have you spent the same time and effort to become an association professional? You have probably not done so, and for good reason. You aren't an association professional and you probably don't want to become one. Though you are a volunteer board member in an association chapter, you probably have the same duties that many professional association professionals have. Even though you aren't an association professional, you probably cope with many of the same issues and problems as these professionals. As such, would you like to tap into the knowledge, tools, skills, and abilities of association professionals?

So where can I, “Go back to school?”, about association management you may ask. One place we suggest is the **“Association of Associations”**?

The who? OK, so they aren't really called that, but that is how we euphemistically refer to the **American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)**, and they have an intimate knowledge of the association business. In other words they know how to use programs to attract and retain members and all the other things we struggle with, as association chapters.

The ASAE have state chapters in 44 states and are a great source of information for your local ASTD Chapter. We have learned a lot by becoming members of the California Society of Association Executives.

- Main site for the ASAE - www.asaecenter.org
- Site for all 44 state chapters of ASAE - www.asaecenter.org/Community/content.cfm?ItemNumber=35145
- Links to books and resources - www.asaecenter.org/Shop/Bookstore.cfm?navItemNumber=52869

Other resources for “going back to school”

Here are a few we'd recommend:

- ASTD Chapter leader information or resources site. - www.astd.org/Members/Chapters/Chapter-Leader-Community/Resources If you haven't used this site, you must. You will find information on marketing your chapter, attracting members, getting speakers, and success stories from other chapters.
- Don't forget a resource close to home. Reach out to your neighboring ASTD chapters and share!

Two great books for those interested in digging deeper in association “best practices”

“7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't” August 23, 2006

by [ASAE and The Center for Association Leadership](#). This was written in conjunction with Jim Collins (Good to Great) and his group. This book is exhaustive, well researched, and full of practical advice for “benchmarking” against other associations or browsing for best practice ideas.

“Road to Relevance: 5 Strategies for Competitive Associations” (ASAE/Jossey-Bass Series), authors are [Harrison Coerver](#) and [Mary Byers](#) The five strategies and related disciplines are clearly defined, and their execution is explained and illustrated through some very clear and illustrative case studies. This is a great pair of association reads!

