Giving Extroverted Members Opportunities to Shine

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Extraverts can get a bad rap, being called out for being loud and narcissistic. But many of those who are classified as extraverts aren’t obnoxious show ponies. There are plenty of extraverted members in every group who are social and engaged, yet not boisterous in the least. In fact, many extraverts have said that at certain times, they are shy, depending on the situation and environment. With three quarters of our population being more extraverted, it makes sense to harness their skills within your chamber network and nurture their desire for stimulating social interactions.

In fact, indie rocker Alex Kapranos stated, “Just because you can leap off a drum kit doing a scissors kick while hitting a chord, people expect you to be an extravert socially. But I’m not comfortable with the idea of small talk at a party.”

True extraverts are simply seeking ways to connect with other people. Besides simply encouraging each member to keep an up-to-date profile on your website in order to share about themselves, it’s critical your chamber gives extraverts opportunities to connect in a variety of ways.

Facilitating Interactivity: At your networking events, be sure to offer a blend of free-for-all visiting along with intentional mingling activities with a purpose. Structure can go a long way to allow extraverts and introverts the opportunities to meet several people comfortably by describing the parameters up front. Try hosting a speed networking event at which members form two lines, face each other, and visit for pre-determined time periods (2 minutes) before everyone switches. This type of event takes the pressure of never-ending small talk out of the equation and provides an atmosphere that not only allows—but even encourages—making multiple connections in an atmosphere that doesn’t diminish the value of true networking.

Extraverts are less likely to be bored and it provides a foundation for meaningful discussion instead of endless small talk.

Encouraging Mentorship: Ask some of your outgoing members with gentle personalities to help welcome a new member a few times a year. Extraverts thrive off new activities and people. Keep mixing up who they connect with, they feel more engaged as their connections grow. Prior to the new member’s first meeting, give their contact information to the mentor and ask them to reach out to the new member before the gathering, either through an invitation to coffee ahead of time or even a simple phone conversation to say welcome. The mentor should let the new person know that they will watch for them at the entrance at the first gathering and show them the ropes.

All new members, regardless of personality type, will appreciate the follow through, but it will especially make an impact on the introverts or more shy extraverts. After that first meeting, have the mentor reach out to the new member again and ask how it went, then offer to sit with them for the next few meetings and to introduce them to others in the group.

Providing Opportunities to Be Featured: Your members have joined your chamber for a reason—to expand their professional network and build connections. Consider providing a variety of options for featuring members, allowing them to share professional and personal information. Some chambers highlight a new member on their website each week, complete with a link to the featured member’s LinkedIn page, website, and contact information. Many chambers also hold a round robin at the beginning of the meeting, asking each member to move into a large circle, then take turns spending 30 seconds introducing themselves, their company, and the rest of their elevator speech.

Connecting Inside and Out: Your extraverted members will appreciate when you offer multiple opportunities to connect throughout the month. Your regularly scheduled meetings are important, but they are not the only way for members to network. Establish activities outside of your regular meetings in which members can participate. For instance, when you notice a group of members talking about attending an upcoming concert in the park, approach them and ask if they will host other members if you extend an invitation to the rest of the membership. From happy hours and concerts to museum visits and service projects, you don’t have to personally participate or host each of these events for members—simply facilitate the deepening of the connections they have established through their chamber connections.

If you reach out to your membership with a broad array of ways to be involved, they will certainly engage in the opportunities that resonate with them. By valuing your extraverts and offering them a variety of ways to participate, you will give them plenty of opportunities to shine. And by welcoming the positive light they bring to your organization, you will in turn add value for all your members.

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