

Member's Quarterly

Summer 2018 Edition

Perspective

Volunteering: Give Back and Get More

How getting involved helps your career

It's hard to find time to do anything these days. We are stretched beyond capacity. So when someone suggests that we join a professional association and get involved, our first thought is when are we going to find the time to do that? Fair enough. But instead of being an energy drainer, many people find that volunteering with professional associations in their field actually gives them and their career a boost. They truly do find that they are able to give a little of their time and get a whole lot back more in return.

Here are just a few ways that getting involved with a professional association might be able to help your career.

Put More Meat on Your Resume

If you belong to a professional organization, you should include that on your business card and even more importantly, on your resume. This is particularly true if you have a professional designation from your association. These are signals to recruiters and head hunters that you are connected to your career and to other professionals in your field. It would be even better if you include that you currently hold a position in that organization like being a Regional Director or a member of the Regional Executive. All these help you stand out from the crowd and even though you love your current job, there may be a better one for you out there.

Make New Contacts

This is not just networking which is an important aspect of belonging to a professional group or organization. It's about meeting and working with others who have similar jobs and the same day-to-day challenges and issues that you have. They understand your pressures and they may have some suggestions and solutions for you. The people you meet in professional organizations and at events become part of your professional support group. Many continue to stay in touch and get together whenever they are in the same area of town. Some might even become your friends.

Continuous Education

If you want to succeed in your career, you must have a commitment to professional development and continuous learning. These are two keys to success that mark the most successful leaders in every field of endeavour. Most associations offer professional development days that facilitate the free flow of information and the sharing of ideas that are vital to personal growth. Volunteering with professional associations will also give you additional input on what topics and workshops you'd like to see in the future.

Learn the Latest Technology

Most of us are overwhelmed by some aspects of technology and social media. Professional associations often offer ways to both engage and learn in social media at the same time. Fellow members can give you the ins and outs of the Twitterverse while others can show you how to get the most out of the business platforms. There is usually a mix of members involved. More experienced members can help with things like improving your resume or networking, while younger members may be more familiar with the latest social media platforms.



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Research Material

One of the benefits of belonging to a professional association is that they often have a wealth of information and research that you can access. Some of it will be available online and other information will come to via newsletters and reports. You will not likely be interested in all of the information and research that comes your way, but you will be sure to find some things that can help you today as well as in the future.

Be a Mentor or Find One

One of the other benefits of volunteering is the opportunity to find or become a mentor. Having someone to guide you through your early and middle career can be extremely beneficial. They can give you advice based on experience in your field and help you resolve and overcome barriers to your career success. If you already have the experience, you can pass it along and help a newbie find their legs in your common profession. Other than your own success, there is nothing better than seeing someone whom you've helped reach their chosen goals at work and in life.

If you're already a member of an IPM's Associations, be sure you check out the options to assist or build your chapter and the many ways you can give back to get more. We're looking for people just like you in all regions including new chapters that we hope to launch soon. If you're not, what are you waiting for?

Nathaly Pinchuk is Executive Director of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].