Profile

**Chapter:**  Metropolitan New York City, Northeast Region  
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**Project:**  Provide a unique program that cultivates speakers, develops leaders from within our chapter, and provides a much-needed vehicle for RIM professional development.

Needs Assessment

During fiscal years 2010-2011, and 2011-2012, the Professional Development Committee of ARMA Metro NYC held several brainstorming sessions to identify topics and speakers for upcoming meetings. The committee identified a depth of speaker talent within our active membership, at the chapter, regional and international level, including Anita Castora, Melissa Dederer, Sophia Empel, Lenore Greenberg, Frank LaSorsa, Marcel Rodriguez, Mary Sherwin, Gene Stakhov and Jason C. Stearns. We also have two University-level professors in Records and Information Management, Lauren Barnes and Fred Grevin, and several chapter members have been invited as guest speakers.

The Committee agreed on the need to attract new speakers. The Committee further realized that we could do so from within our chapter, as it is rich in breadth and depth of RIM experience. A further benefit of developing new speakers is to train the next leaders of our chapter, for presentation skills are part of leadership skills. This is part of being effective in our jobs. All Records Managers (experienced and inexperienced alike) not only must understand the practice of the Records and Information Management (RIM) profession, but we must also know how to communicate. All experience levels can benefit from more practice!

Challenges

- We can invite outside speakers to our meetings, but that usually has significant costs, and speaker availability issues for our scheduled dates

- We have a large reservoir of talent within the chapter which we have not yet tapped, because it has not yet been developed.
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- We are in need of “new blood” to present at our meetings that comes from within, as our chapter members appreciate “case studies” – real life experiences

- Development of speakers who could make presentations to ARMA Chapters in other parts of the country.

Solution

During the brainstorming sessions, the Committee came up with the idea of providing an internal, “Toastmasters™”-like program for our members, tailored more specifically to the needs of our chapter.

Lauren Barnes, with the help of others, invented the acronym for the program: “ASPIRE- Advancing Speakers: Presenting Issues in RIM Effectively”. Mary Sherwin took the ideas discussed, convened a subcommittee of the Professional Development Committee, and drafted the program vision statement, outline and next steps.

The vision of ASPIRE is to harness the reservoir of talent in the ARMA Metro NYC Chapter by providing a program that cultivates speakers and provides opportunities to learn and practice presentation skills. This program also provides a new way for our chapter members to get involved without serving on a Board or Committee.

The program is designed to provide participants, over a series of meetings, a way to learn good presentation techniques, such as how to present a formal speech related to RIM and associated topics, how to speak extemporaneously, how to chair a meeting and evaluate other speakers, and how to effectively use audio visual tools and props. Participants learn: techniques that control difficult situations and audiences; how to engage their audience; how to speak within allotted time limits; and, how to become a more proficient speaker. Ultimately, participants will be given the opportunity to present at a chapter meeting.

Participants must be willing to commit to attending a series of meetings where they will learn from experienced presenters on how to give effective presentations, and will also have hands-on opportunities to present to the group. Types of presentations may include introducing your RIM program, presenting a RIM topic without visual aids, and presenting to an audience using multiple presentation techniques.

The goal of the program is to develop leaders from within the chapter, by focusing on the various aspects of presentation skills, as the ability to present and lead are interdependent.
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Implementation

“ASPIRE”, a unique Professional Development Program of the ARMA Metro NYC Chapter was launched in our Special Edition March Newsletter and at a program workshop held during our March All Day Educational Event.

As part of the launch of ASPIRE, one session at the March Event was dedicated to introducing the launch of ASPIRE. Stanley Zareff, a presentation skills and executive coach specialist at Credit Suisse, assisted us with the first steps, and taught us how to “Communicate with Impact!”, including tips and techniques to develop a stronger sense of speaking style.

Benefits Achieved

The launch of ASPIRE was extremely well received at our March Educational Event. A list of initial participants was created, and the program will continue with an evaluation and update scheduled for 2013.

ASPIRE provides a very focused professional development tool which will be a multi-year implementation, It is anticipated that ASPIRE will eventually becoming a regular part of our chapter’s professional development structure, and a program that can be replicated by other Chapters.