The
ISPI Charlotte Chapter
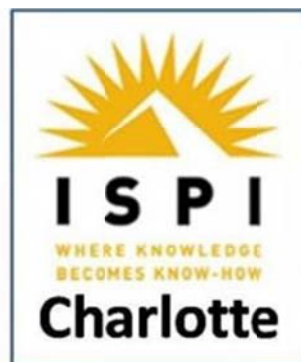# Start Up Story
2009-2010

By Dick Handshaw and Guy W. Wallace, CPT

![ISPI Charlotte logo](ISPI WHERE KNOWLEDGE BECOMES KNOW-HOW Charlotte)

Foreword from the CPC Chair

Making Great Happen at the Chapter Level

Let's face it. ISPI and the chapters struggle to attract new human performance improvement professionals. We know that they are out there, but they don't know that our chapters or international exists. In a metropolitan area, we may have more than 350 potential members with only 35 to 60 chapter members. As a result, our chapters struggle with membership, volunteer fatigue, and sustainability. To change this trend, we need new ways to attract and grow our membership.

The Charlotte chapter models chapter growth and outreach. Instead of applying traditional chapter strategies while hoping for different outcomes, the Charlotte chapter leaders ignored the old assumptions and started with new ideas.

This document details their success story. As chapter leaders, I believe that you will benefit from learning how the Charlotte chapter planned and implemented their strategy. New chapter leaders can learn from Charlotte's successes and decide the most appropriate way to use the Charlotte strategy when forming their own governance. Existing chapter leaders can also learn from their successes and adapt as needed.

The ISPI Chapter Partnership Committee (CPC) applauds Dick and Guy for their thought leadership and thanks them for sharing their strategy with the rest of us.

Gary DePaul, CPT, Ph.D.

2010-2011 Chair

Chapter Partnership Committee

Foreword from the Authors

We started the Charlotte Chapter of ISPI in the summer of 2009 by discussing our shared goals, philosophies, and operational practices. We spent a fair amount of time discussing "what not to do" – as well as what to do and what to be as a local chapter. It has been a rewarding and satisfying experience, especially because it worked so well one year into the experience.

When we began we looked for some existing best practices and advice about starting a successful chapter, but didn't find much that went into the details of what we were seeking. In a way that was good because it forced us to use our own vision and ideas from all our past experiences with any kind of professional association.

Dick has been actively involved in ISPI and ASTD chapters for decades, starting several, and brought a wealth of practical "been there and done that" experiences.

Guy has been a member and supporter of his local chapter since 1979 and has presented at 14 chapters since 1982. As an International Board Director and as president of ISPI International he has discussed their needs with chapter leaders on many occasions.

Together we decided to merge our ideas and start a local chapter. We are both committed to the goal of providing affordable professional development in HPT topic and skill areas to our local community.

At the one-year mark we have more than 180 members, and the attendance at our programs and workshops have averaged in the mid-fifties and the mid-forties respectively. We have a small financial reserve of a few thousand dollars.

This is our story, which we offer to help you think through what we thought through. If you are contemplating starting or reviving a chapter, we think that is a worthwhile venture, and we congratulate you for your initiative.

We don't expect that you will adopt what we did, as you will need to plan and execute according to your local situation.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy the process and benefit from it as much as we did. We welcome the opportunity to speak or correspond with you and your chapter leaders if you believe that we can offer you help and explain our ideas further.

Call us or email us if you have questions!

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Credits

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How to Use this Story

We were asked to share our story as one model, one approach to help you think through starting a new chapter or reviving a chapter that may be struggling. Not everything we did in Charlotte may work for you, but we believe everything here is worth your serious consideration – as a starting point and not an ending point.

Our story is being written approximately one year after the formation of the Charlotte Chapter Board of Directors. Our membership one year from our formation stands at 188.

We recommend that you read or at least skim this story in a linear fashion first. We have modularized it to serve your thinking about individual committees and to perhaps be a useful reference – or foil - during the initial planning and early months and years of your chapter.

Vision – Marketplace - Focus

Vision – the Reason for Being
We believed that we needed to clearly state the chapter's "reason for being" to provide us a focus for our marketplace because you can all too easily get muddled in

the dozens and hundreds of things that your chapter could get involved with – when you really should have a focus.

Keep the vision simple and easy to articulate.

When we co-founded the Charlotte chapter we chose

"Affordable Professional Development with the Top Names in Human Performance Technology."

View of the Marketplace

We first discussed and estimated the potential size of our community of Instructional and Human Performance Technology professionals in our city and local area. We discussed how many major businesses and consulting firms there were. We projected a conservative estimate of the number of names and email addresses we could come up with later with our intended Board. It was easily more than 300.

We also discussed "the competition" with other local professional associations. We had local ASTD, SHRM, ASQ, and other affinity groups that we might pull from - if we could meet different needs.

We tried to figure out who our potential competition was and who they served, how often these groups met, and what they provided to their members. We then determined what we would address based on our perceptions on what was missing. To start we had to make many arbitrary decisions.

Our Initial Focus

We felt our initial focus should be on filling those priority needs and gaps with the execution of our vision. For instance, we knew we needed to work on getting agreements with top-name presenters for our bimonthly chapter meetings.

We knew that we also needed to give a platform to local members as well - and we planned on doing so at the end of the first full year. But as co-founders we still strongly feel, as we did when we started, that if our programming isn't top notch, our members would not join or attend meetings.

We have really focused on providing top-name presenters for ninety-minute programs every other month.

As we worked later with the rather large board, we found our simple vision statement helpful to maintain our focus. It is important that we all generally agreed on not taking on more things than the volunteers can handle, or than your membership will attend. We don't want to squelch new ideas; we just prioritize them after a discussion about how they fit with our vision.

We had seen too many similar organizations fail by spreading themselves too thin, by trying to do too much, too early. We had hoped to avoid that. And we think we have. We know that the balance here is tricky.

Another aspect of maintaining focus alluded to earlier deals with meeting frequency – and what would be too much and what would be too little. We thought monthly was too much and that quarterly was not enough for our marketplace - with 8 headquarters of Fortune 500 firms.

We also believed that we needed to publish our program schedule more than a year in advance, so member prospects could readily see the "value proposition" before they signed up as members. We want to do this every year and announce next year's programs every October or November.

The bimonthly meeting schedule would help keep us from burning out our members with too many events. We also needed to avoid burn-out of our board members – especially by not using the board as caterers.

We both agreed that there was too often, too much of a focus on food at chapter meetings we have experienced in our professional careers, and that that focus often created caterer roles for board members. We both agreed that we needed to avoid that.

We also discussed our need for inexpensive or free meeting space. This is often tied to the food. We knew that we needed a partner for meeting space, and to cater casual food and refreshments to be delivered to that space. We considered our physical geography – to pick a general location that would be convenient to all, or similarly inconvenient to all. We studied the map and the expressways.

That brought us to a desire to partner with UNC Charlotte and their School of Education as they were in "our sweet spot" on the map of Charlotte – it was within a half hour drive for most.

We explored the partnership concept with leaders from UNCC, and then we worked out the details. Lucky us, they

had both space that they were willing to let us use for free, and they could also be our caterers for each of our meetings and workshops at reasonable cost of typically $5 per person for an evening program.

We decided as we started with this new agreement that we were going to have to softly market that we are "not a supper club" – because that's what many of our potential members have experienced locally at other professional organizations. We knew that we needed to gently manage their expectations about this early and often about "how we are different" from other groups nearby.

With all of that as a foundation, we sought out the VPs for our initial board – those who we personally knew that we could count on—and we asked them personally, face-to-face or on the phone. We decided not to solicit these critical volunteers using email, especially one broadcasted to everyone possible.

Frequency

We spent quite a bit of time trying to determine the frequency of our initial plan for chapter activities, such as:

▶ Programs
▶ Workshops

► Other Special Activities: book club meetings (face-to-face or online), an annual picnic or ice fishing derby, etc.

► Board Meetings

► Data Exchange with ISPI International (which is required quarterly – but please check the current requirements with ISPI International)

► Interactions with other professional organizations

We had to challenge ourselves to think about how much is too little and how much is too much - for our members and our committee leaders and volunteers – given the other similar groups that they might also already be involved with locally!

We decided on using the second Thursday of every other month as our cycle for chapter meetings where we would have our speakers. On the "off" months we planned to publish our newsletter and hold our Board meetings on the same second Thursday cycle.

We also decided to offer two-to-three workshops a year, each to follow a monthly evening meeting, where we could leverage the speaker's travel and living expenses.

And we decided to publish a journal twice a year so that our members could publish – but to hold off on that until after the first year.

Chapter Governance

When we began to consider the board structure we decided to have each committee leader serve as a board member and a vice president of the chapter to expand participation in chapter leadership. So we had to think through our potential and priority committees. We had to do that for our submission paperwork as well. We'll cover that committee structure next.

We reviewed other ISPI chapters' web sites to determine the various organizational and pricing structures. We decided that we should make all board VP positions two-year terms and have the incoming president-elect handpick his or her part of the board, so when the president-elect becomes president, he/she would have allies in any chapter initiative that they had decided to support. Each committee has a VP and an AVP (Assistant VP).

That structure also enables us to use a succession planning process to continually recruit new board members. More on that later, too.

Here is our list of initial board vice president (VP) and assistant vice president (AVP) positions:

- President
- President-Elect (elected)

- VP of Finance (elected)

- VP of Programs/Workshops
- AVP of Programs/Workshops

- VP of Membership
- AVP of Membership

- VP of Publications
- AVP of Publications

- VP of Marketing/Communications
- AVP of Marketing/Communications

- VP of Student/Faculty Services
- AVP of Student/Faculty Services

- VP of Community Services
- AVP of Community Services

Elected Positions

According to our self-written chapter By-Laws, we have two elected positions, which were appointed positions for our forming chapter, as there initially were no other members.

- ► President-Elect
- ► VP of Finance

Plus there were other *possible* committee/task forces that we knew we needed, including

- ► Nominations & Elections Committee
- ► ISPI Chapter of Excellence Award Submission Committee

We decided to establish those *after* we established the main committees.

We believed that "more is better" when it comes to chapter committees and leadership positions, as it spreads the work around, keeping more people actively engaged as well as helping to avoid individual burnout or fatigue.

We also thought that a forced rotation of our appointed leaders would keep them from fatigue – and would make a

lot of chapter leadership positions available to many more of our members!

Selecting the Board

We sought out VPs for our initial board who we knew we could count on—and we asked them personally, on the phone, if not face to face.

When we established the board initially for both the VP and AVP positions, we did not initially distinguish "who was who" as far as the VP or AVP roles. We decided we could defer that determination until later, closer to the end of our first full year.

Securing Key Partnerships

Clearly one of the best innovative ideas we had was to secure the College of Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) as our partner.

For starters, they have an excellent program in Instructional Systems Technology. Professors and students have taken an active role in our chapter. We have one faculty VP and one student VP on our current

board. Requests from them caused us to create our Jobs and Student Interns postings sections on our web site.

One of the biggest chapter headaches and contributors to volunteer fatigue, as we have mentioned before, is having to use board members as caterers. In our case, the University has an outreach group that performs three important functions for us:

1. They secure free meeting space for us. They have a whole campus to choose from. We usually meet in the College of Education building, but if we need a specially designed room for a full two-way video, two-way audio event, they have one for us. If we need a room for 35 people or for 70 people, they have one. We couldn't beat the flexibility or the price--FREE.

2. The College of Education can cater our meetings inexpensively, so we can put our members' money into speaker expenses rather than food. At evening meetings we usually serve small appetizers; during workshops we provide sandwiches or light meals.

3. Finally, the University provides us with credibility, visibility, and public relations help. The location is well-known and easy to get to. The Chancellor and the Dean of the College attended our first meeting to get us started. We regularly submit our program

descriptions to the University PR Department for release in local media.

We felt lucky to have the option of a University partner. But if we could not have secured them, we would still have the needs of both space and food to contend with. It really turned out to be one of the better ideas we had and were able to realize. If we didn't have a willing local University – we might have investigated a Community College, a community center, or even a corporate partner.

Succession Planning

After "Programming-Programming-Programming" and "Location-Location-Location" was addressed, the next most important item we talked about in our early discussions was board succession.

All volunteer-run professional associations have certain stages they go through during their life cycles and unless they find a way to stay vital and meet the changing needs of members they can die. Most organizations undergo a start-up phase with steady growth and eventually reach a mature stage where growth levels off but remains healthy. They may also experience a steady or sharp decline in membership followed by one or more revival efforts that

may or may not sustain them. Programming and other content can go stale and start missing the mark with future members.

We believe that early and aggressive succession planning of board leadership is one way to avoid an eventual decline. We both believe that a lack of strong leadership is almost always the cause of a failure of a volunteer professional association.

Sometimes a chapter tries to do too much, diluting its volunteer strength and energy. Sometimes it loses its edge over a competing organization, and sometimes, and this is most often the case, a chapter runs out of compelling speakers and fails to attract attendees and begins to lose members. We were wary about all of that. We wanted to keep our future chapter continuously refreshed via a constant flow of new members and ideas. We decided the best way to do this was through key chapter leadership positions and a Board Succession system.

A Supply of Fresh and Energized Leaders

The key to having enough new and talented leaders is quite simple. Involve as many people as you can in the running of your chapter from day one.

A recent ISPI International survey of chapters (from 2010) showed that half of ISPI chapters had five or fewer board members. Charlotte was the only chapter with 15-20 board members. Because each committee has both a VP and an AVP - and a few committee members - someone is always aspiring to move into the next leadership position.

And it is good to have someone available to step up and take over for someone else, should "life intervene" for that someone else.

Some ISPI chapter leaders have asked us how we managed to recruit that many board members. Again, we didn't just ask for volunteers. That rarely works. We approached the people we wanted and asked them personally. We explained that we needed them and only them for that job. It works.

If you're still skeptical about a 20-member board, do the math. Now that we have more than 180 members to choose from, finding 20 committed and experienced

leaders shouldn't be that difficult. Especially if they don't have to be caterers, too!

Programs and Workshops and Pricing

When the two of us first discussed starting a chapter, we both realized that we agreed 100% with the sentiment that…

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">"It's all about the programs"</p>

We still feel that way after one year.

Programs

Without a good reason to come to our face-to-face meetings, we didn't think that our chapter would reach the size needed for us to keep our member costs affordable.

Being part of ISPI, we wanted to focus on evidence-based practice and avoid a lot of the hype (Multigenerational Differences and Learning Styles, etc.) that seemed to dominate some programs at other organizations. That

would be a key differentiator for us – to be **"evidence-based"** in all of our programming!

We also know that there is a large network of ISPI conference speakers who would gladly come to chapter meetings? to speak . . . if you can cover all of their expenses. For that you need good attendance.

**To get good attendance,
you need great speakers.**

**To afford great speakers,
you need good attendance.**

That's pretty much it. Any "watering down" of our key value proposition to our members we thought would reduce their interest and attendance. So we decided to go for only the top names in ISPI and HPT for our programs and workshops. Guy's 31 years involvement with ISPI International enabled him to reach out to prospective speakers he was sure would be a draw and a success.

We decided that we would bring in these top speakers from anywhere in the country if we had to. We didn't want to let geography be an obstacle – although costs might be. If the speakers are local: great. If they are not, we will fly them in - or arrange for a distance presentation.

We do reserve one meeting a year, in December, for both a panel of experts and local presenters.

The December Program of our first year will see us conducting a Poster Session to enable members to share what they are up to in the world of HPT. This we hope would help bring a local community flavor to the chapter as well as give some exposure opportunity to our members and the HPT work they are doing every day.

We found in our early speaker search that many would gladly conduct a free webinar for any chapter. That might someday be a greater percentage of our programming mix – but not initially!

Workshops

Twice or three times a year, we plan to host a one-day workshop following our evening meeting program.

This gives us the opportunity to leverage our speaker travel expenses over two meetings, our usual 90-minute evening meeting, and a workshop that usually goes from 9:00 to 4:00 the following day. We recommend spring and fall months for workshops to avoid peak holidays and vacation seasons.

We do incur more expenses for workshops because we also provide coffee and pastries, a sandwich for lunch and refreshments in the afternoon. Plus, there are typically printing costs – which we avoid for our bimonthly evening meetings by sharing a PDF of the speakers' materials for our attendees to print themselves – or to bring into the session on their laptops.

Pricing

Our vision includes the word "affordable," and we wanted to keep our pricing as low as possible.

Our annual membership fees are $25.00 – simply because we wanted them to be inexpensive. For students and faculty it is $10.00.

Prices for our evening programs are typically $15 for members, $5 for students $10 for faculty, and $25 for non-members.

Our first workshop was priced at $45 as an introductory offer. Our second workshop was $60 for members; the fee is less for students and faculty and more for non-members.

With a consistent 60 plus members registering and 40 to 60 members registering for the two workshops, we look at workshops as moderate fundraisers.

We always split our post expense "profits" with our workshop speakers. This makes our speakers smile and encourages them to keep their travel and printing expenses low.

Our Annual Calendar

This is our current "planned" calendar for 2011.

Month	Chapter Meeting 2nd Thursday	Board Meeting 2nd Thursday	Newsletter 2nd Thursday	Other
January				New Board takes Office
February				Workshop
March				Biannual Journal
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				Workshop, Nominations
November				Elections Biannual Journal
December	Special Program			Board Transition Ceremony

Membership

As we thought about our possible membership candidates, we considered our geography and where those members might come from. In addition to the more obvious large-to-medium sized companies, we wanted to be sure to count all the smaller consulting firms in the area. The consulting firms tend to provide members who become more active.

We had a prospect list in our database that consisted of more than 300 names that were compiled simply by asking our 16 or more original board members to send us their best candidates for membership. Membership starts with the board, which again, makes initial board selection so critical.

We approached our prospective members with a full year of bimonthly programs already scheduled, and a "current looking" web site that featured the details for the upcoming program on the home page, and emails every two weeks for about three months leading up to the first meeting.

After the initial three-month membership campaign, we had recruited 131 members before our first meeting and workshop with Thiagi.

It was going to be very important to us to have a large database of prospects to draw from. Our goal was to have at least 300 qualified email addresses in our database before we started marketing.

We reasoned that if we had a good program schedule to sell, a reasonable cost to join and attend along with a large enough prospect list, we should be able to attract members.

That's how it worked for us.

One final comment on our thoughts about membership:

The key to our low pricing model is large number of participants.

Marketing and Communications

We learned that this is also a critical board role and is often ignored or done poorly by many chapters. Without effective marketing and communications, both externally and internally, we knew that we would not succeed.

Board Communication

The first form of communication we needed to get right was the communication among our board members in the months prior to starting regular operations.

We had lots of documents on Google Docs to review and update – and this tool was useful to us to manage these functions.

Three weeks before each board meeting, we send Outlook invitations to our board members. The Outlook invitation also includes a conference number for those who cannot attend in person. We urge all our board members to attend in-person if at all possible.

A standard agenda form is set up in Google Docs the week before the meeting. Board members are asked to complete their portions of the agenda with their accomplishments for the past two months and their plans for the next two months. Our members quickly got used to this, and it works great.

Meeting Announcements

These are the lifeblood of your marketing program. It is absolutely critical that a picture, bio and draft session description be provided to marketing and communications for the meeting announcement. This is consistently posted on our web site the day after one of our regular meetings or workshops.

Three email announcements are sent before each regular meeting. They are timed to be sent by our web site management system at regular intervals and are sent automatically. This is a great system and another key to our consistency and success.

Other E-mail/Communications Campaigns

From time to time, we have had other reasons to contact our members, especially because we conduct little chapter business during regular meetings. But we are always careful to schedule these emails in such a way so that we do not overload our members with too many messages in any short timeframe.

All of our communications must pass through our marketing and communications committee for editing and release. They must also be posted by our Online Services

committee, which acts a backup to make sure we are not overloading our members with too many messages.

Publications

Due to some over-achieving volunteers, our publications efforts exceeded our expectations early on. We developed our electronic newsletter as a marketing piece. We are about to release a biannual journal as an outlet for our members to enable them to publish.

Newsletter

Because our regular meeting schedule is bimonthly, our newsletter is published every other month so we can keep in touch with our members on a monthly basis. In keeping with our promise to many of our speakers, we publish their articles and an interview with them prior to the monthly meeting at which they will speak. We also promote their books and other resources to our members. This gives them plenty of visibility for making the effort to come speak to us and gives us good information to attract attendees.

As we do very little chapter business at our meetings, we also use the newsletter as a vehicle to publish chapter announcements and business.

One of the most popular features of our newsletter is the member profiles in which at least three members are featured each month with pictures and brief bios.

Our newsletters are available to anyone on our prospect list and anyone who visits our website. To see one of our newsletters, go to www.ispicharlotte.org and select the "News" tab.

Journal

Our journal is strictly a member benefit. You must be either a speaker at our chapter or be a member to be published in our journal, and you must be a member to receive it on a regular basis.

The journal will be published twice a year and has no limit for the length of articles included. We intend to simply publish whatever meets the editorial criteria at the time of publication. Content may range from two articles to twenty.

Finance

Getting Started

One of the first things our VP of Finance had to do was to set up a checking account with a bank. To do that, we needed a Federal Tax ID number. To get one, we needed to declare our corporate entity.

This is where we had to make some tough decisions early on.

Corporate Entity

There are two basic categories of corporate ownership:

- For profit, such as a sole proprietorship
- Not-for-profit, such as a 501c6

Being a sole proprietorship costs little or nothing. You can declare yourself as a sole proprietorship and obtain a tax ID number the same day. You may have to pay a local business tax, but that's about it.

The problem with that simple solution is that any "for profit" business must have an owner in the form of an individual or a group of owners in the form of partners or shareholders.

Given the transient nature of chapter boards and the **liability issues** for one or more people, establishing ourselves as a sole proprietorship was only a temporary solution for ISPI Charlotte - to get us a checking account. Dick, our president, did have to file our small profit in our first year on his personal taxes. Even though we didn't make enough money to pay taxes, he still had to file.

Within a few months we applied for not-for-profit status as a 501c6. We might have done this sooner if it weren't for the $850 filing fee and the daunting form that someone has to complete.

We obtained free legal advice to determine that we best fit as a 501c6. Now that we've done that, no one else should have to – as they can use the following link and go to page 47 to see a description of what type of organization qualifies as a 501c6:

http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf

It explains that a 501c6 is for Business Leagues, and that a professional organization qualifies as a Business League.

We also had to complete Form 1024 which can be found with the following link:

http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1024.pdf

Annual Budget

Our annual budget includes the following items:

- Revenue from membership dues

- Revenue from meetings and workshops

- Revenue from advertising in the newsletter and journal

- Web site costs - we pay $50 per month for up to 500 contacts in our database of web site and event and membership management

- Meeting space costs - ours is free from UNC Charlotte

- Membership costs - for three in the international organization (many chapters reimburse the three chapter leaders who must be international members for this expense—$165 x 3 = $495.00/year – and we might do the same to increase interest in running for our local offices.

- IRS filing fee of $850 to become a non-profit (not all chapters need to do this – and this is a one-time cost)

- Food and speaker travel and expense costs for each meeting and workshop

We determined our probable costs and expected revenues and then did the math for each meeting - so we understood before the meeting what our break-even number would be for the number of attendees needed to cover our costs! Although we are committed to $15.00 meeting costs for members and $5.00 for students and faculty – we were open to the fact that this might not work and that we might need to raise our prices.

At each board meeting, we ask our Vice President of Finance present to our chapter leadership a realistic budget for overall chapter operations - and also a program-by-program financial plan (see below) - to ensure that we are minimally going to be able to cover the travel and expenses of our speakers. We have been able to earn a slight surplus for each program and workshop so far – and we believe that is due to the quality of our speakers!

Meeting and Workshop Budgets

It is the responsibility of the Program and Workshop committee to present a budget to our board for each upcoming meeting – and to provide that to the VP of Finance.

We don't pay speaker fees except for a 50/50 "profit sharing" for our workshops after everyone's expenses have been paid (the speaker's first); but these events usually include travel and expenses which may include handout copying expenses.

Again, we are getting our meeting space for free and the catering for finger food and refreshments for $5.00 per person from our university partner.

By adding the expenses and plugging in different cost figures, we can calculate a break even number for attendance for each type of meeting: program or workshop.

For example, we may have the following expenses:
- Airfare - $400
- Meals and lodging - $150
- Copying of handouts - $50
- Food -$5per attendee

Total variable expenses $600 (not including food, which is a fixed cost)

To determine our breakeven number of attendees at different price points:

If we charge $10, subtracting $5 from each fee for the fixed cost of food, we have $600 divided by $5, which means we need 120 people to break even.

If we charge $15, subtracting $5 from each fee for the fixed cost of food, we have $600 divided by $10, which means we need 60 people to break even.

If we charge $20, subtracting $5 from each fee for the fixed cost of food, we have $600 divided by $15, which means we need 30 people to break even.

So far we have kept our program and workshop expenses low and our database of members and prospects high (around 500), and we have attracted more than 60 people to each of our first six meetings. And we've had more than 50 attendees for each of our first two workshops.

Our goal is to build a small financial reserve only – not a war chest! We need a small financial reserve to be able to cover any losses for two or three meetings that might have

poor attendance and cause us to incur a "loss." But's that all we need, a small cushion for rainy days.

Financial Reporting to the Board

The VP of Finance provides financial updates to the board every other month at each board meeting. Financial reports include:

- Monthly revenue
- Monthly expenses
- Profit and loss
- Budgets for upcoming meetings or workshops
- Profit/loss for past meetings or workshops

Financial Reporting to the Membership

The VP of Finance also provides financial updates to the membership every quarter. Basic information such as revenue, expenses, and profit or loss data is published on the web site in the Members Only section.

We are committed to spending as much of our revenue as feasibly possible on member benefits and equally committed to transparency in all financial matters.

On-line Services

Chapter Web Site

This can be a big headache for many chapters. We sought simplicity and low costs.

Web sites can be expensive to create and difficult to maintain. But there are some exceptions. We chose a product called Wild Apricot.

When we first started with Wild Apricot, we could manage 250 contacts for only $25 per month. This was perfect for us as a start-up.

Once we exceeded 250 members or prospects in our email list, we jumped to a 500 contacts limit for $50 per month—still a deal in our view.

Make no mistake, this is not just a web site…it is chapter management software. It manages our member database and handles renewals automatically. It manages our events and processes on-line registration and payment.

It also takes care of our job and internship postings and provides a dynamic web site that is easy for us to update. As if all that isn't enough, we get a variety of useful, current reports, instantly.

Social Media

We use LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter to keep people informed of upcoming events and the releases of our newsletter and journal.

Surveys and Online Voting

Surveys are an important tool for us. We recently conducted our first member survey for gathering inputs about meeting topics, speaker preferences, and information about what people want from their ISPI chapter.

One simple rule of chapter management we have learned over the years is:

**"Ask people what type of program
or speaker they want,
give it to them,
and they will pay a reasonable fee
to attend your meetings."**

We will also be conducting our first vote for President-elect and Finance VP online. Again, we believe chapter meetings are for networking and speaker presentations, not for chapter business. We will save our members' valuable face-to-face time by voting online.

Community Services

We waited a year before we created this committee, and then it was done based upon a local need—hey, we are HPT people after all.

Like many county governments, ours faced many budget cuts in 2009 and 2010. One of our members is Director of Training for the Mecklenburg County Library, which is rated one of the finest in the country. Once she lost all of her staff and was asked to do training with volunteers, we offered to have her organization become the first recipient of our Community Services committee.

We believe our chapter should be of service to our community as well as our members. So, we will be looking for member volunteers to help the library with the development and delivery of instructor-led courses and e-

learning courses. We will be looking for non-instructional HPT efforts in the future – but you've got to start where the needs are – and this fell in our laps and seemed to be a win-win for everyone.

At this writing, we are in the very early stages of this first project. Visit our web site, and we bet you will see progress.

Additional Chapter Committees and Task Forces

Nominations and Elections Committee

We appointed a small group to run this committee, who will oversee our nominations process and elections process, per our bylaws. Their effort is focused calendar-wise, usually in a two to three month cycle from start to end.

Chapter Excellence Award Submission Committee

We also appointed a small group to run this committee because we wished to apply for this criterion-referenced award right away.

Local CLO Network Committee

We had earlier talked about doing something with local CLOs with another local organization that fell through, but Guy remembered that the Kansas City chapter had done an outreach effort to that community. We may investigate that further and establish a committee to lead this effort – but probably much later.

Forming Chapter Support Committee

We had also discussed using our chapter to help form other chapters and revive other chapters. And that morphed into the ICC – the ISPI Chapters Coalition. The ICC is an on-line site "for chapter leaders, by chapter leaders." Someday we may establish a committee with the intent of starting more ISPI chapters around the globe!

Being a Part-Time Virtual ISPI Chapter

The Charlotte chapter is mostly a geographical chapter who, on occasion will use distance technology to recruit speakers we might not otherwise be able to afford or get due to their travel restrictions. That is how we got Allison Rossett to speak to our members in our first year.

For this section of our story we enlisted the support of Brett Christensen of the Armed Forces Chapter of ISPI.

We are hoping to be prepared for that day when we might need to do more rather than less using distance technology. Note: ISPI currently has 3 full-time virtual chapters where the programming is accessible only via the Internet.

> Why would you want to go virtual? The answer will be driven by the target populations you want to attract.

> The Armed Forces Chapter exists to serve the professional development needs of HPT practitioners in military services around the world.

> A virtual chapter requires the same needs, considerations, planning, and communications as a "brick and mortar" chapter with the exception of physical facilities. A virtual chapter's success will be determined first by the value offering, its programs, as discussed above.

> The fundamental difference is the use of technology as the *only* medium. As discussed previously, this provides an advantage in how flexible you can be in attracting top-notch speakers as there are no travel

costs involved and scheduling considerations are much more adaptable to the needs of the speaker.

It is important to find volunteers who are comfortable with and embrace technology to succeed virtually. Because all of your communication with and by your membership is done virtually, your volunteers must be champions of technology and examples to follow in its use.

As discussed in the on-line services section, the choice of computer applications to deliver your programs and conduct your chapter business is a key consideration at the outset. There are many free and low-cost solutions. The AFC has in the past partnered with a variety of military agencies including the USN, USCG, and Canadian Forces to provide services at no cost. Look for expertise that can guide you in these decisions based on your target populations needs.

The experience of the Armed Forces Chapter (AFC) with respect to committees has been that there is a point where too many volunteers make coordination difficult. This is primarily due to working across four or more time zones. The majority of work for the AFC is done by a three-member Board of Directors.

The president handles scheduling and hosting the webinars, the president-elect is responsible for the publishing of the chapter newsletter and the secretary-treasurer is responsible for membership and the budget. Ad-hoc committees are formed as required and deals with issues that are outside of the normal chapter operations. The immediate past president is responsible for leading the submission of the Chapter of Excellence Award submission for the year.

Treat your speakers like celebrities whether they are or not! They are the value proposition for your members.

All our speakers provide their services for free. We market them through all our communication channels including newsletters, email, web site, Facebook, LinkedIn, and HPT Connections. Every speaker is given an engraved pen and pencil set as a token of our appreciation.

This lean approach has worked well for the past several years. The common factor, as with successful brick and mortar chapters has been the strong leadership and commitment of the Board and volunteers.

In closing, as was also mentioned previously, brick and mortar chapters can also leverage many of the strategies used by the virtual chapters to expand their value offering to members and are encouraged to find innovative ways to do that. Virtual chapter leadership can certainly provide advice to you. All you have to do is ask!

Thanks Brett!

We expect to deal with this in future years to bring in more global speakers to our Charlotte NC area members!

By the way, the three virtual chapters of ISPI currently are:

Armed Forces

[ISPI Armed Forces Chapter](#)
Brett Christensen, Past President
Tel: (613) 463-8837
Email: Christensen.bd@forces.gc.ca

Doug Craft, President
Tel: (757) 856-2012
Email: Douglas.m.craft@uscg.mil

Jim Parry, President-Elect
Tel: 757-856-2403
Email: afc.ispi.president.elect@gmail.com

Scott Rooke, Secretary Treasurer
Tel: 410-858-8148
Email: afc.ispi.treasurer@gmail.com

This chapter is open to all ISPI members with an affiliation to any Armed Service. Annual dues are $12/year.

Capella University

ISPI Capella University Virtual Chapter
Rose Noxon, President
Tel: (540) 672-6661
Email: noxon@hughes.net

This chapter is exclusively for the students at Capella.

Global Network

Performance Improvement Global Network Virtual and Bilingual (English/Spanish) Chapter
Mariano Bernardez, CPT, PhD, Chapter President
446 North Wells, Suite 181
Chicago, IL 60654
Tel: (866) 877-9312
Email: mbernardez@expert2business.com

Resources for ISPI Chapters

From ISPI International

Applications and instructions for forming a chapter and many other helpful documents may be found: [here](#).

Always check the ISPI International web site for the latest versions of chapter support items!

From Chapters

Join the ICC – the ISPI Chapters Coalition - and start networking and sharing with other ISPI chapter leaders about the needs of chapters.

> ***This ICC site – is a private site, which is being pilot tested in 2010 – and was moved in August 2010 from Ning to a WordPress site - as the original service provider changed their business model from offering free sites to only offering paid sites.***

To join the ICC – please start a WordPress Account and then email Guy W. Wallace with the email address that you used for that account, at:

guy.wallace@eppic.biz

Final Thoughts and Thank Yous

Thank you to our ISPI Charlotte inaugural board members for 2009 and 2010:

Membership
VPs: Heather Fausnaugh and Donna Mattison

    Committee Members:
    Walker Owens and Kim Richardson

On-Line Services
VP: Chris Adams and John Heun

    Committee Members:
    Richard Hartshorne and Guy Wallace

Programs/Workshops
VPs: Marc Donelson and Shannon Godwin

    Committee Members:
    Paula Anderson, George Stevens, and Mark Dudley

VP at Large
Michael Bland

Finance
VP: Ursula Smith and Terry Langley

Academic Affairs
VPs: Shannon Alpert and Richard Hartshorne

Marketing/Communications
VPs: Kim Adams and Sara Miller

Committee Member:
Brent Jennings

Publications
VPs: Emily Stevens and Andy Tucker

Committee Members: John Bailey and Renee DeLaPorte

Community Services
VP: Kristin Park

Nominations & Elections Committee
Chair: Ursula Smith

Committee Members: Gary DePaul and Sara Seelapasay

Chapter Awards of Excellence Committee
Chair: Tracy Scott

Committee Members: Michelle Jackson, and Rich Miller

ISPI – International Society for Performance Improvement

ISPI's Vision & Mission

ISPI's vision is that members have the proficiency and insight to customize Human Performance Technology to meet the needs and goals of their organizations and clients, so that the members are recognized as valued assets.

ISPI's mission is to develop and recognize the proficiency of its members and advocate the use of Human Performance Technology.

Performance Improvement Standards

The 10 Standards are based on ISPI's four principles. They are summarized below:

1. Focus on results and help clients focus on results.
2. Look at situations systemically taking into consideration the larger context including competing pressures, resource constraints, and anticipated change.
3. Add value in how you do the work and through the work itself.
4. Utilize partnerships or collaborate with clients and other experts as required.
5. Be systematic in all aspects of the process including: The assessment of the need or

opportunity.

6. Be systematic in all aspects of the process including: The analysis of the work and workplace to identify the cause or factors that limit performance.

7. Be systematic in all aspects of the process including: The design of the solution or specification of the requirements of the solution.

8. Be systematic in all aspects of the process including: The development of all or some of the solution and its elements.

9. Be systematic in all aspects of the process including: The implementation of the solution.

10.   Be systematic in all aspects of the process including: The evaluation of the process and the results.

ISPI Chapters: The purpose of chapters is to provide a local forum for your personal and professional development in the application of Human Performance Technology; provide an opportunity to develop your leadership ability, and provide a local networking arena.

Membership in an ISPI local chapter is separate and apart from membership in ISPI International.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;font-weight:bold">We encourage you to become
a member of both!</p>

<p style="text-align:center">www.ispi.org</p>

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