

## Chapter expansion proposal

### Florida Chapter

This proposal was developed by the IABC Southern Region Board of Directors Chapter Support Team with the goal of preventing the closure of struggling chapters and offering value to members who are not currently being served.

#### Current state

With the rise of virtual meeting tools like Zoom, it's become much easier to offer IABC members virtual professional development and network events. Whereas we previously relied on face-to-face events, most IABC chapters have now transitioned to a virtual model due to constraints which arose from the COVID pandemic.

The Southern Region is currently facing the loss of some chapters which have become dormant or struggled to recruit volunteer board members. This led us to consider how we might reshape our ideas on how a chapter should be structured and run.

Florida IABC members are currently structured as follows. This information is based on the latest Chapter Vitality Report.

**Jacksonville chapter** – 16 members, active board

**Tampa Bay** – 7 members, inactive board

**Central Florida** – 23 members, inactive board

**Florida-based Members at Large** – 11 members

In total there are currently 57 members in the state of Florida. Only about 16 of them are receiving the member value that IABC has to offer. Central Florida has expressed interest in closing the chapter. If this occurs it's likely the 23 members will slowly leave IABC over the next two-year period, based on examples from other closed chapters.

#### Proposal

The Southern Region Chapter Support Team would like to propose a scenario for discussion with the goal of saving the underserved members in Florida. We've used examples from other IABC chapters which are state or region-wide to help design this structure.

All Florida chapter would merge into one state-wide chapter which hosts both virtual and face-to-face events. All funds would be merged into one account. A board would meet virtually and would consist of:

- President – provides oversight of chapter activities and liaises with region and international.
- President Elect – supports president and board positions and fills gaps as required.
- Secretary/Treasurer – provides audio or written board reports, opens and manages bank account.
- VP Professional Development – develops virtual professional development opportunities and oversees local activities via city/area Directors.

- VP Communications – communicates events and opportunities to member and non-member list, maintains website.

The roles of Past President and VP Membership could also be added, and Secretary and Treasurer could be separated into two roles as succession planning takes off.

Under the VP Professional Development would sit Directors for each city or area identified. For example, the Tampa Director would be responsible for scheduling networking events that are easy and low to no cost (i.e., Networking9 and happy hours) in the Tampa region.

With this approach all members across Florida could have some networking opportunities in their area and could participate in virtual professional development from the chapter, region and international.

### Advantages and Risks

If the Florida chapters continue in the current state, Central Florida and Tampa Bay will likely close. They are currently inactive and have no board. As we have seen from experience, members whose chapters close are much less likely to renew a membership year after year and we often see them fall away from IABC all together within 3 to 5 years.

If Jacksonville continues as is, they will likely continue to struggle to seat a board. The current chapter president has been in place for several years. Merging the resources and active participants across the state would allow the new chapter to recruit volunteers and seat an active board.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of this proposal is the ability to merge resources and volunteers across all Florida cities. Requiring not 3 full boards as it does today, but just one active board across the state meeting virtually. This would also allow us to reach into other cities around Florida to recruit new members without the need to seat a full board in each city. Miami is a great opportunity area for potential new members.

The only risk to this proposal is a lack of buy-in from membership which may prevent the seating of a strong board to take this proposal forward. The Southern Region board plans to mitigate this risk by holding a meeting for all IABC members located in Florida and present a clear way forward for their consideration.

### Transition

The Southern Region Chapter Support Team will work with the existing chapters to complete the Procedure for Consolidating Chapters from IABC International which is summarized below.

**Step 1:** Chapters will first review the proposed consolidation with their region board. The region board must vote to approve the consolidation before the request can be taken to the IEB.

**Step 2:** The region will submit a formal request to HQ and the IEB detailing the reasoning for the proposal.

**Step 3:** The IEB will discuss the proposal to consolidate and will either approve the request or discuss an alternative solution.

**Step 4:** Once the IEB approves the consolidation, an email explaining the decision for the chapters to merge and how this may impact the member will be sent to all members affected by the change.

**Step 5:** The chapters will need to select what bylaws to adopt for the new consolidated chapter and agree to this procedure.

**Step 6:** The respective chapter boards must collaboratively agree on a slate of leaders to serve on a transitional chapter board until full elections can be conducted by the newly consolidated chapter based

on its bylaws and board cycle. The transitional slate must be posted online for a minimum of 30 days and ratified by membership from both consolidating chapters. If respective chapter boards cannot agree to a new slate, or there is no leadership in place from one or both of the chapters to be consolidated, an open re-election should be conducted by the region on behalf of the consolidating chapters.

**Step 7:** The merging chapters must transfer all of their funds to a new bank account or the bank account of the chapter that will still exist. In cases where the merging Chapter funds are not traceable or accessible, the new consolidated Board will take steps to recover the funds with support from the region as appropriate.

**Step 8:** All chapter members will be moved to their new chapter on the IABC website and in the association management system.

**Step 9:** The chapter or chapters that no longer exist, depending on whether the chapters merged into a current chapter or created a new one, will be removed from the website and as an active service within the association management system.

The Southern Region Chapter Support Team will also guide the new Florida Chapter Board of Directors to establish common tools, as needed, such as website, email platform, financial planning tool and file sharing.