

Being a Great Chapter Chairperson

By Melissa McGavick, WBN Cranberry Chapter Member, WBN President of the Board 2009 -2010

A good Chapter Chair is the driving force behind a successful WBN chapter. Good facilitation and leadership skills and the ability to work with all personality types are key skills required for this position. The Chapter Chair conducts the chapter meetings and most importantly – paints the vision for the chapter’s success. A positive attitude is the key to keeping the meetings positive and productive.

Each chapter differs slightly in the terms a Chairperson is elected to serve. Traditionally, the role has been a 3 month term after serving a three month term as Chapter Secretary. However some great Chapter Secretaries do not wish to serve in the role of Chapter Chair and some great Chapter Chairs are not the best Chapter Secretaries.

Some chapters elect officers for 6 or 12 months, however the thought of a 6 or 12 month commitment can be intimidating. Another option holding chapter elections every 3 months giving the chapter the option to reelect the officer for another 3 month term, up to one year total.

The following checklist shows the activities and events the Chapter Chairperson is responsible for addressing throughout her term. Although the list may appear daunting on paper, if the Chairperson is organized, the whole process takes an average of less than two hours per month.

When first elected as Chairperson:

- Meet with outgoing executive committee and obtain files from outgoing Chairperson.
- Meet with new executive committee to create a Chapter Challenge Success Plan.
- Download all chapter leadership materials from website and read it.
- Attend live WBN Chapter Leadership Training program.
- Watch recorded trainings from Chapter Leadership Training if you didn’t attend the most recent live event.
- Observe who in chapter would make a good Chairperson and encourage her to consider it for the next term.

- Prepares a concise presentations for all meeting segments over which you will preside , keeping with time allotted on agenda
- Is able to explain the benefits of WBN membership and assist with application procedures.
- Learns from Secretary about any absences that may need to be discussed.
- Make a point to greet of all visitors.

Every meeting

- Prepare the meeting agenda, including order and time allotted. (Agenda items listed below)
- Can send completed agenda to members or have the chapter secretary send it by email to the members.
- Maintains the schedule of presenters of business presentations and table topics.
- Presides over meeting and calls for votes and keeps meeting flowing and on time.

Once a Month

- Spends a few moments with potential successors to help groom her for the position

Once a Quarter

- Hold a chapter executive committee meeting. Held once every three months to make sure things are going well within the chapter.
- The last month you are Chairperson, meet with incoming executive committee and give files to newly elected Chairperson. Help prepare new Chairperson for office.



About the Author: Melissa McGavick is President of McGavick Interactive Training, and a professional public speaker. Typically she works with successful business people who want to develop their public speaking and communication skills, leadership potential, and sell their ideas or products more effectively. She can be reached at by phone at 412-400-3414. More information is available at www.mcgavick.net.

Melissa has served as a Chapter Rep and Chapter Chair of the Cranberry WBN chapter, chaired ten different WBN committees, served as both Vice-President (2008-2009) and President (2009-2010) of the WBN Board of Directors. In 2008 she was selected as the WBN Woman of the Year. Melissa has also served in the top leadership positions in four other non-profit organizations, including the Pittsburgh chapter of the Downtown Women’s Club, Women Entrepreneurs in Business, Women Think P.I.N.K., and Toastmasters International District 13.