

## **IABC Heritage Regional Leadership Institute Offers Inspiration for Chapter Growth**

#WeLeadIABC

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VP Professional Development, 2018

*As part of IABC Harrisburg's commitment to providing relevant and practical communications tools and knowledge to members, board members take opportunities to participate in leadership development training offered by IABC. As a returning board member in 2018, I was fortunate to attend the IABC Heritage Regional Leadership Institute (RLI) in Pittsburgh on November 5. Below are some of the takeaways from the event.*

RLI welcomed current, future and past Heritage Region chapter champions for an afternoon of idea sharing, problem-solving and networking. It was held at Pittsburgh's Omni William Penn.

The four-hour session was a prelude to the region's three-day conference, *On Point: Learn, Connect, Communicate*, which offered educational workshops geared toward chapter growth and communications best practices.

### **Goals**

RLI goals included:

- Building relationships with chapter leaders and regional board members
- Collaborating with peers to develop strategies and tactics
- Learning tangible action steps to support chapter successes
- Brainstorming ways to overcome chapter challenges
- Identifying how the Heritage Region can support chapter leaders

### **State of IABC**

Kicking off the afternoon, International Executive Board Chair Sharon Hunter and Chapter Relations Chair Micayla Felicion updated attendees on the current state of IABC. They discussed the importance of forming a cohesive network to stay relevant in the communications industry, recruiting for leadership roles and making professional connections.

### **Global Survey**

In addition, Hunter and Felicion recapped the Leader Value Campaign, which incorporated a global survey to measure what members value most about IABC leadership opportunities. There were more than 18,000 respondents and here is what they ranked as most useful for their careers: keeping current with new developments/issues in the field (62%), networking and sharing knowledge with a community of peers (60%) and local chapter experience (57%).

Positive comments from the survey included:

- “At my first IABC meeting, I felt validated as a professional.”
- “A culture of collaboration — a safe environment to learn, share and take risks.”
- “IABC has honed my leadership skills more than any paid gig.”

### **New and Coming Soon**

- **Online Accreditation Exam:** Some exciting news emerging from IABC includes the opportunity to take the Global Communication Certification Council’s accredited certification program online to earn a Communication Management Professional (6 or 8 years’ experience depending on education level) or Strategic Communication Management Professional (11 or more years’ experience) designation. A self-paced learning program and a handbook will help candidates navigate course objectives.

Earning one of these professional designations is a great way for communicators to convey to employers the knowledge, expertise and value they bring to a company.

- **Corporate Membership:** Anticipated to roll out in March is a new corporate membership package that will offer a price break for companies that pay for IABC memberships for up to 25 employees. Watch the IABC Harrisburg website for updates.
- **Vision Statement (see photo):** The new IABC vision statement, *Advance Profession, Create Connection, Develop Strategic Communicators*, was developed in February at the IABC Leadership Institute meeting in Dallas. The three pillars convey a perspective that communicators can embrace globally.
- **Foundation Giving Campaigns:** New giving campaigns will be launching as part of the [IABC Foundation](#). November 28 is [Giving Tuesday](#), a global giving movement, and IABC challenged chapters to raise funds to support the Foundation.
- **Private Social Network:** In development is a new portal to create cluster groups or private conversations to solve business issues and share files. Stay tuned to the IABC Harrisburg website for details.

### **Leadership Think Tank**

Facilitating the afternoon’s leadership think tank was IABC Harrisburg’s Tamara Gillis, Ed.D., ABC, IABC Fellow, FRSA. Dr. Gillis initiated group discussion on how chapters can identify challenges and find viable solutions to address them. Small groups tackled three overarching topics surrounding recruiting and retaining members, encouraging volunteerism and creating professional development programs. All Ideas were reviewed by the large group to offer feedback and suggestions for action steps to use in local chapters.

### **Rapido-Style Success Stories**

Two chapters, Boston and Lehigh Valley, briefly shared their growth success stories via Skype as an inspiration for small chapters. Leaders from IABC Harrisburg plan to reach out to their boards for ideas on how to grow a “small but mighty” chapter.

### **Takeaways**

There were some of the salient points from the meeting that will be utilized by IABC Harrisburg as the board prepares for 2018:

- How to stay relevant
- How to position a chapter for growth
- How to recruit volunteers
- What is coming next

Overall, RLI was an excellent experience that offered the IABC Harrisburg chapter a supportive peer network and ideas for membership expansion. Board members will continue to engage in IABC educational opportunities and share information with members as we strive to offer transparency and beneficial professional development programs for you, our members--**thank you for being an IABC Harrisburg member!**