

3

Ways Data Improves Chapter Performance & Your Relationship with Components





Table of Contents

1	How chapter member engagement data helps you make a case for a bigger component relations budget	04
	Challenge: getting access to chapter member engagement data	05
	How to get your hands on chapter member engagement data	06
	Use member engagement data to make a case for investing in chapters	07
2	How chapter financial data alleviates the volunteer leadership burden and reduces financial risk	08
	Challenge: understanding a chapter's financial situation	09
	How chapter financial data helps you support chapter leaders	10
	Alleviate the volunteer leadership burden—and financial risk	11
3	How chapter performance data helps improve your association's relationship with chapters	12
	Challenge: balancing your need to know with chapter autonomy	13
	How chapter performance data improves your relationship with chapters	14
	An uncertain future requires trusted chapter partnerships	16

Introduction

We call it “chapter” performance throughout this eBook as a generic term, but you may refer to your components as states, affiliates, sections, networks, regions, or something else entirely! The content and concepts still apply.

Even in a virtual world, the distance between an association and its components (chapters, sections, affiliates, states, or regions) can sometimes seem impossible to bridge.

Relationships can run the gamut from icy to civil unless you’ve cracked the code on chapter cooperation. It’s difficult to get closer to your chapters when you can’t see what’s going on in them.

You might get some of the information you need from monthly reports or the rare call with a chapter leader. Nagging chapters for member engagement, chapter performance, and financial data is tiresome and often futile. But without this data, you don’t always know where to focus your resources or how to help chapter leaders manage their administrative responsibilities.

You’re stuck with the limited resources you have now unless you can prove the ROI of chapters and make a case for a bigger chapter budget.



How chapter member engagement data helps you make a case for a bigger component relations budget

Pandemic-related revenue losses and uncertainty about what lies ahead have led to a tightening of association budgets.

This is bad news if the leaders of your association see chapters as a cost center, not a revenue source. In reality, chapters contribute to your association's bottom line. They bring in new members and deliver value to members through virtual and in-person educational events, volunteering, and networking—activities that increase member engagement and retention.

But how do you prove the ROI of chapters?

With the help of chapter member engagement data, you can make the business case for more HQ attention and investment in chapters. Member engagement data shows the positive impact chapters make on association revenue when they're empowered to better serve members.





Challenge: getting access to chapter member engagement data

Your association management system (AMS) captures member engagement data at the headquarters level, but chapter activity is the missing piece. How do you know if a chapter is offering fewer programs? If you wait for them to submit a report, it will be too late to intercede and repair any damage to membership value.

Monthly membership reports alert you to **declining membership renewals—an obvious signal that a chapter isn't delivering value**. But declining renewals and retention are lagging indicators. They measure something that happened (or didn't happen, in this case) in the past.

A leading indicator, like chapter member engagement data, helps you get ahead of retention issues and prevent non-renewals. If you can monitor event registration and payment data in real time, you can spot worrisome engagement trends before it's too late. You can see the leading indicators that influence member retention.

You need a way to peek behind the curtain. You need to see how members are participating in chapter activities so you can ensure chapters are delivering value and generating dues revenue as expected.

How to get your hands on chapter member engagement data

Because chapter payments and registrations flow through our software, [Billhighway](#) allows you to peek behind the chapter curtain and capture the chapter member engagement data you need.

Use chapter data to your advantage

The data collected by Billhighway shows you which chapters need your focus. You can advise these chapters to identify the members who aren't attending events or participating in other activities and develop a proactive retention strategy for them.

You can suggest chapters learn more about member needs by analyzing website page views and email clicks, and then remind members about relevant opportunities and benefits. This type of intervention increases retention and revenue.



The data collected by Billhighway helps you identify non-members attending chapter events. If chapters can convert these attendees into members, you'll both see increased revenue in the years ahead.

You can also spot the chapter's most likely advocates by **identifying members with the biggest "spend"** at the chapter level.

With Billhighway, you can watch registration and membership trends across your entire chapter network, identify low-performing chapters, and intercede before it's too late—before memberships drop or chapters fold.

See Billhighway in action.
Chat with us!



Use member engagement data to make a case for investing in chapters

The C-suite and board can easily see how much your association spends on chapters, but the [chapter ROI](#) isn't so obvious.



Chapter member engagement data proves that the resources your association invests in chapters are justified. This data also supports your argument for additional chapter resources from HQ.

Engagement data shows value

Chapter engagement data shows the value your members and your association receive from chapters. Chapters help your association achieve its goals and improve its bottom line by:

- ✓ Recruiting members
- ✓ Saving memberships by delivering value on the local or state level
- ✓ Spreading awareness of HQ benefits
- ✓ Increasing the audience for HQ programs
- ✓ Strengthening member loyalty

Local is where it's at for many members. Chapters are the face of association membership, the boots on the ground.

Your association should **leverage them more, not less, to help you deliver membership value**—and see a positive impact on retention, reach, and revenue.

How chapter financial data alleviates the volunteer leadership burden and reduces financial risk

Managing chapter leadership duties is tough enough in the best of times, but in times of uncertainty, volunteer chapter leaders are really struggling.

Many of them work long hours and are worried about their job or business, concerned about the educational future of their children, or wrestling with anxiety about their chapter's future and hoping nothing bad happens on their watch.

Most chapter leaders are volunteers, not association management experts. Even fewer are financial wizzes. They might not even be in charge of a budget at their day job. But now, in a less than ideal situation, they're trying to keep their chapter on solid financial ground. How well are they doing? Do you even know?

If only you could alleviate some of their financial anxiety and administrative stress so chapter leaders can focus on delivering value to members, not balancing spreadsheets.

Spoiler: you can.





Challenge: understanding a chapter's financial situation

Many associations don't have the full picture of what's going on with chapter finances. You might not have a process or system in place that shows you in real time how financially secure a chapter is.

Your chapter budget

Is a chapter's budget allocated in the right way? Where is the chapter overspending or underinvesting? It's hard to tell if a chapter is even using sound financial processes and practices.

Your association **can't be the last to know** if a chapter is going downhill.

By the time you learn a chapter is making unwise financial decisions, having financial difficulties, or worse, becoming insolvent, it may be too late to turn it around.

If a chapter goes under, members are the ones who suffer as they watch their local professional community fade away.

How chapter financial data helps you support chapter leaders

Imagine if you could access a chapter's financial data in real time, what could you do with this intel?

You could identify areas where a chapter spends too much. Let's say you see a recurring charge for expensive [chapter website maintenance](#). With this data in hand, you can intercede, provide guidance, and suggest cheaper alternatives, perhaps a website hosted by HQ's AMS.

With this solution, you know chapters are providing a secure, up-to-date user experience for website visitors with consistent branding across the chapter network and less work for chapter leaders.

You could learn about chapter activities by seeing where they spend money. You might discover chapters with:

- ✓ PR campaigns supporting HQ goals
- ✓ Outreach programs for college students or young professionals
- ✓ Innovative virtual education programs



Identify under-performing chapters

Chapters with the highest average revenue per member must do something right. You could identify and share these [chapter bright spots](#)—exceptional chapter practices—with other chapter leaders.

Chapter financial data helps you identify under-performing areas of a chapter's budget. It gives you an excuse to dig deeper and provide advice.

You can see which chapters are at risk and know where you need to spend more time [coaching volunteer leaders \(or staff\) on financial management practices](#). This intel helps you prioritize the type of [financial training and resources you provide to chapters](#).

Wondering how Billhighway can help your chapter leaders? Let's talk!



Alleviate the volunteer leadership burden—and financial risk

Financial and administrative responsibilities require a great deal of a volunteer leader's time and energy. If you can find a sustainable way to reduce this burden, chapter leaders would have more time to focus on member engagement.

Software like [Billhighway](#) gives chapter leaders the tools they need to automate and simplify routine administrative tasks, such as banking, finance, accounting, invoicing, and 990s.

Reduce your financial risk

Best of all, Billhighway provides a healthy balance of visibility for HQ and autonomy for chapters. Billhighway reduces the [risk of financial mismanagement](#) by volunteers. Your association can see what's going on and pull the financial reports you need without having to nag chapter leaders for them.

[When you ease the chapter's administrative burden, you'll see **more qualified members willing to serve as volunteer leaders, which helps to fill HQ's leadership pipeline too.**](#)

Chapters on solid financial footing can afford to invest in technology and programs that deliver value to members. As a result, member recruitment and retention improves, and everyone's revenue increases.

How chapter performance data helps improve your association's relationship with chapters

A crisis can bring some couples closer together but drive others further apart. How did the pandemic affect your relationship with chapters?

Are you still talking regularly with chapter leaders or getting ghosted?

Are you still “all in it together” or regressing into “us vs. them” territory? It might initially seem like a stretch, but chapter performance data can put you and your chapters on the path to a rewarding relationship.





Challenge: balancing your need to know with chapter autonomy

Understandably, you want to know what's happening—and what's not happening—in chapters so you can provide the support they need and [build a stronger relationship](#) with them. But, even in the best of times, you probably have to incentivize (or strong arm) your chapters into submitting the data you need.

Three successful strategies

We've seen several innovative and successful strategies for getting chapter data:

- 1 The [chapter recognition program](#) at the [Association of Government Accountants](#) awards points to chapters based on their activities and compliance with affiliation requirements.
- 2 The [Association for Corporate Growth](#) receives the chapter data it needs via its annual chapter [self-assessment](#) process.
- 3 The [College and University Professional Association for Human Resources](#) collects data through its [chapter awards program](#).

How chapter performance data improves your relationship with chapters

So how do you turn that around? How do you [get the chapter data your association needs](#)—data that chapter leaders will benefit from too—without stepping on toes and causing resentment and stress?

Software like [Billhighway](#) allows for a **healthy balance of association visibility and chapter autonomy**.

You can see chapter performance data in real time—no nagging required. For example, with Billhighway, you can see the:

- ✔ Number of events chapters are hosting
- ✔ Percentage of members and non-members attending
- ✔ Average member cost per event
- ✔ Member retention rate



The “us vs. them” mentality

But sometimes, the threat of disaffiliation is the only thing that works. That’s no fun for anyone.

Even if you explain the rationale behind your data request and spell out what’s in it for them, some chapters will get around to it on their own sweet time or may never bother to comply. For a busy, stressed out volunteer leader, submitting data to HQ is way down on their list of priorities.

Nagging for chapter data does absolutely nothing for relationships. It feeds the “us vs. them” mentality, and, if that’s already the norm, this dangerous mindset becomes even more entrenched. You get the reputation for always wanting something and always pushing something. Take, take, take... what have you done for me lately, the chapter leader thinks.



Share chapter bright spots

You have access to chapter data that allows you to benchmark and understand the correlations between chapter activities and performance.

Once you've identified low-performing chapters, you know where to allocate more of your time by coaching and providing resources.



When you identify high-performing chapters, you can study these [chapter bright spots](#) to see what they're doing differently to engage and deliver value to members.

1. What kind of programs are they offering?
2. What are their marketing strategies and tactics?
3. How are they getting more member engagement?
4. How are they attracting non-members to their events?

Share these [bright spot practices](#) with other chapter leaders. Look for opportunities for peer mentoring and pair struggling chapter leaders with successful ones.

An uncertain future requires trusted chapter partnerships

You can't face existing challenges or future unknowns without [strong relationships with chapters](#). They need your support and the connections you can help them make with other chapters.

Since chapters personify the association for most members, you need them to be the voice and face for your association.

Chapters role in purchasing decisions

The [Illinois Principals Association](#) (IPA) recognized the influential role chapters had in members' purchasing decisions. IPA asked their chapters to help them increase annual conference attendance, giving each chapter a targeted prospect list.

+30% Conference attendance increased by a whopping 30%!

Chapter leaders had access to a [Nucleus dashboard from Gravitare Solutions](#) where they could see their progress toward regional goals and the progress of other chapters.



Your conference strategy

Chapters have a potentially huge role in your association's conference strategy. No one knows how many members and industry professionals will be willing or able to travel in the coming year to large in-person events.

Make chapters part of your hybrid event strategy. Your association can host a [virtual conference](#) while chapters (or regions) host in-person satellite conferences.

In 2020, the [International Congress and Convention Association](#) (ICCA) hosted a virtual conference "hub" with eight regional "spokes" around the world. ICCA broadcasted the virtual live feed to the spoke locations. The spokes also hosted live in-person programs.

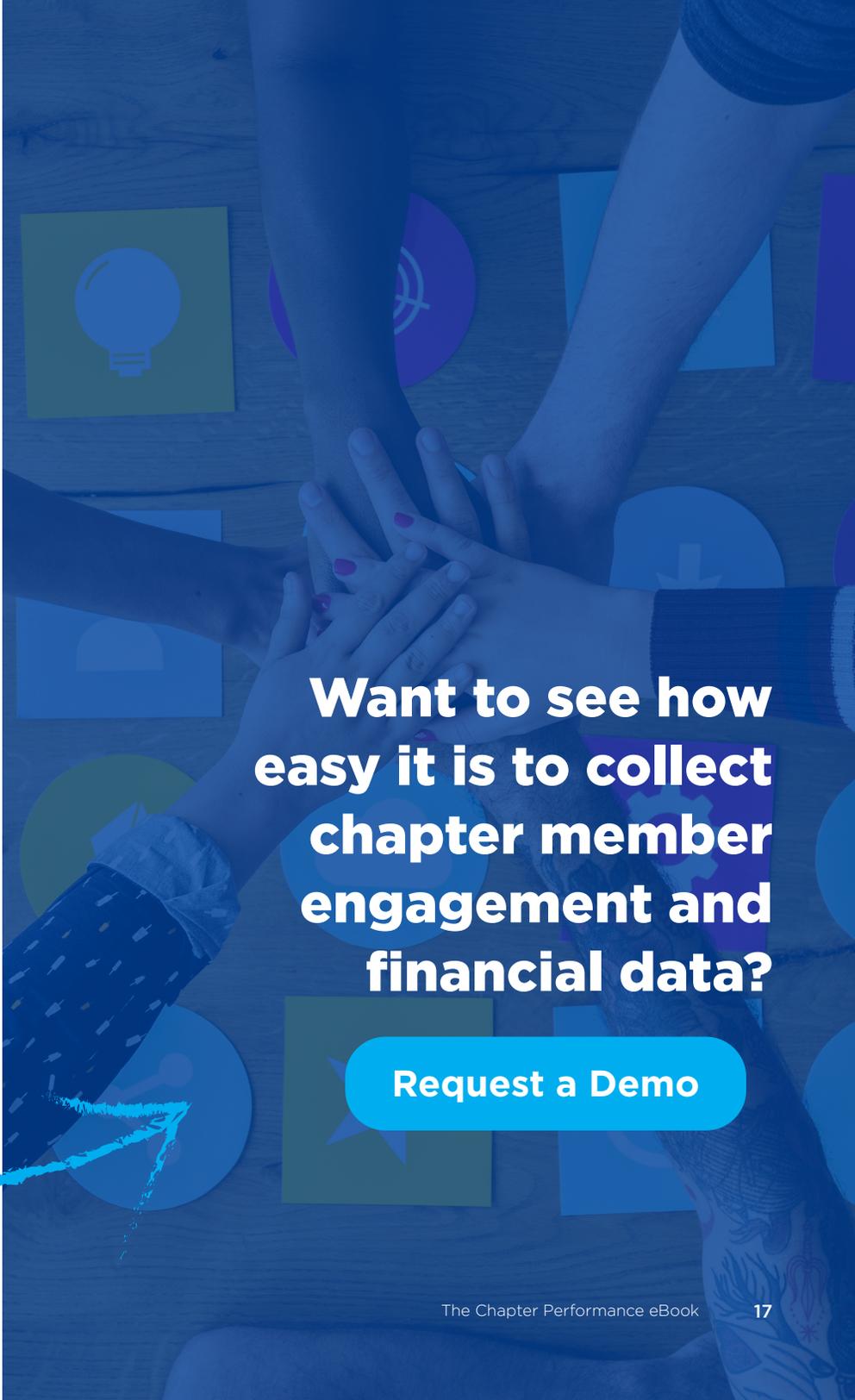
Build a strong relationship with chapter leaders

These collaborations require [strong relationships with chapter leaders](#) who are willing to share both the work and rewards (revenue). HQ provides the resources and chapters provide the local, personal touch.

[Chapter performance data](#) can help you lay a foundation for your association and chapters to learn from each other and grow stronger together.

Strong chapters contribute to your association's impact. But you need to know how chapter members are engaging—or not engaging—so you can help chapters contribute to your bottom line, and you can both continue delivering value to your members.

You also need more visibility into their financial performance without stripping away their autonomy. With a solution like [Billhighway](#), you can alleviate their administrative burden while accessing the chapter data you need.



Want to see how easy it is to collect chapter member engagement and financial data?

[Request a Demo](#)



ABOUT BILLHIGHWAY

Got Chapters? Billhighway is a Component Management Solution that increases ROI across your entire organization by providing chapter performance and engagement data to headquarters and tools to optimize component operations.

CALL: 866.245.5499

EMAIL: marketing@billhighway.com

VISIT: www.billhighway.co/associations