

**2005-2006 Club Achievement Report, Club Management  
Austin Advertising Federation, Scott Van Osdol, President**

**Introduction to the Austin Advertising Federation**

The Austin Ad Fed is comprised of some 240 members representing all areas of the advertising industry. Celebrating its 76<sup>th</sup> year, the club is an established institution with an annual budget of approximately \$120,000. The principal areas of club activity are:

- **Public Service Campaigns** afford our members opportunities to use their skills to give back to the community. This year more than 50 members volunteered with:
  - Art From the Streets, promoting homeless art sale (\$80,000 earned this year).
  - Hill Country Ride for AIDS campaigns valued at ±\$50,000. Donations grew 166% to \$452,000 from \$170,000 in 2003.
  - Sims Foundation, low cost mental healthcare for musicians: new logo, paper system, poster campaign, assist fundraising to handle increased caseload.
- **Advertising Education** is directed at members and students. In the broadest sense, ad education/professional development includes all programs, luncheons, the ADDYs and volunteer opportunities where students work alongside professionals.
  - Luncheon topics: Adobe “How To” sessions, a Texas Lottery RFP, and Yahoo! VP of Band Marketing speaking on new media and market shifts.
  - Match scholarships sold by National Student Advertising Competition teams (±\$4000). Funds helped Texas State University win 2005 national competition.
  - Multiple scholarships funded at ±\$100,000.
  - Job Shadow/Mentoring introduces high-school students to careers in advertising.
  - Developed and updated list of ±450 internships on the District and Austin websites.
- **ADDY Awards** are attended by 600-800 industry leaders annually. Twice in recent years Austin entries won National ADDYs in numbers second only to New York City.

**1. State your club/federation’s management objectives.**

1. Improve board goal-setting and implementation of plans.
2. Make Cultural Diversity a principal goal in all planning.
3. Increase member participation through broader volunteer opportunities.
4. Expand sponsorship opportunities and increase income.
5. Refine “housekeeping” duties: accounting, communication, meetings, etc.
6. Improve leadership development.

**Objective 1:** *Improve board member goal setting and implementation of plans.*

**Goals Background:** *Set and Forget*

The Austin Ad Fed traditionally used a Board retreat to plan strategy. The retreat was useful in setting goals, but too little attention was paid later to implementing, evaluating, and revising those goals. By relegating goal setting to the retreat, there was a cathartic effect: once goals were discussed, they were seldom mentioned the rest of the year.

**Goal Setting Solution:** *Make goals a mandatory committee report item*

We began setting new goals for the 2005-2006 Board of Directors immediately following the June 1st board election. The president worked through the summer with committee chairs to:

- Appoint each board member to a committee. For the first time in recent years all members were given explicit committee duties. (**Exhibit:** Ad Fed Board List.pdf)
- Include Goals as a mandatory agenda item in each committee report.
- Meet early with leaders to help goals, identify resources, and clarify procedures. (**Exhibit:** Membership Committee Agenda 7.26.05)
- Hold a July new board member orientation. (**Exhibit:** New Member Orientation 7.05)
- Hold an August board meeting at which members articulated their goals for the year, following guidelines provided by the president. (**Exhibit,** August Board Meeting email)

**Goal Setting Results:** *Top of Mind*

By continually speaking to our goals, they remain top-of-mind, are regularly updated, and better inform the planning process. Our post-ADDY March Board meeting will be a broad-ranging discussion, focused on evaluating progress in the first half of the year, and re-evaluating goals for the second. (**Exhibit:** March 1, 2006 Agenda, Board Goals Report Card 03036).

**Objective 2:** *Make Cultural Diversity a principal goal in all planning.*

**Cultural Diversity Background:** *Tokenism*

In the past the Cultural Diversity committee produced a successful Job Shadow Day which introduced minority high school students to career opportunities in advertising. While effective, this single program constituted a form of tokenism: the board behaved as though it had effectively discharged its obligations to cultural diversity with this one program. Recently the Committee challenged the board to take Diversity more seriously and provide more resources, support, and engagement. The board has stepped up to that challenge with all good will.

**Cultural Diversity Solution:** *Increase number of minority board members. Move Diversity up the agenda. Make diversity a mandatory committee report item.*

In recent years our 20 to 30-person board has always included several Hispanic and at least one African American. This year the president focused on recruiting new members of color. Even though the Austin advertising community is overwhelmingly white, we succeeded in recruiting a second African American, a woman, two Hispanic women (one will become VP Membership and is being groomed for president), and one Asian-American woman.

In addition, one new board member is an Anglo male who works as Creative Director at the largest African-American owned ad agency in Texas. In a recent meeting he said, “I used to practice diversity because it was ‘the right thing to do’. Now, it’s how I pay my mortgage. That change in perspective is huge.” This different point of view makes him particularly effective in helping other Anglo board members appreciate the importance of diversity issues.

The diversity committee leads off each board meeting with a wide-ranging discussion of what diversity means in our industry. Discussion tends to focus on hard-headed business realities: how reaching out to underserved markets builds the bottom line; the pervasiveness of Black Culture among the young; the rapid growth of Urban mass-media formats; hiring underutilized minority musical and production talent; and the need to reach out to high-school students to assure a broad pool of future employees capable of reaching minority markets. (**Exhibit:** Diversity Report, February).

Each committee is asked to speak to diversity issues, just as we speak to goals. We’re new to the process, and still learning. But early results are promising, and further discussion will help us broaden our Diversity practice. In coming months we will discuss fundraising for stipends for minority mentors, supporting a new Urban Music Festival, and participating in a City of Austin-led survey and discussion of minority cultural resources and career opportunities.

**Cultural Diversity Results:** *Gathering Data, Making Connections*

Recent discussions revealed a strong potential to link resources and programs in our education, public service, and diversity committees. For example, our work with the Sims Foundation (musicians’ low cost mental health care) opens up opportunities to work with a new Urban Music Festival tied to a sports event that brings 50,000 minority students to Austin.

Within the coming weeks we will plan fundraising development to underwrite stipends for mentors to minority high-school students. This program will involve members from Diversity and Ad Education committees, supplemented by our Fundraising Chair. Without these discussions, we wouldn’t have begun the process of providing mutual support across committees.

The Diversity Committee has written and is now publishing an on-line survey of employment diversity at Austin ad agencies (**Exhibit:** Diversity Survey). As results come in and are evaluated, we expect the metrics to help focus our discussion and planning.

**Objective 3:** *Increase member participation through person-to-person contact and broader volunteer opportunities.*

**Membership Contact Background:** *Off the Radar*

Anecdotal information suggested our members often felt abandoned after joining the Ad Fed. They got plenty of attention while being recruited, and then “dropped off our radar” once they joined. Members complained that they weren’t asked to volunteer, and if they offered, weren’t contacted with opportunities.

**Membership Contact Solution:** *Person-to-Person Contact*

The Membership VP purchased AAF membership certificates and cards to be included in a New Member Packet, mailed to new members. The packet also includes a hand signed welcome letter, the AAF Member Benefits list and invitation collateral for upcoming events. Committee members will then follow up with a personal phone call to each new/renewing member, asking if and how they want to participate or volunteer.

**Volunteer Opportunities Background:** *Good Works*

The second component of membership engagement is providing meaningful opportunities to contribute professional skills to deserving non-profit campaigns. One of our most successful membership recruitment and retention tools is public-service volunteer work. Our members feel engaged, make new friends and professional contacts, learn new skills, produce portfolio pieces and earn the chance to win ADDYs, all while providing support to deserving area non-profit organizations.

**Volunteer Solution:** *Give it Away, It Comes Back*

We began our new season with a new volunteer campaign. At the June Big Wig Awards—our annual business meeting honoring our industry’s unsung heroes, the service providers—the president launched the new brand message, “*Give it away. It comes back.*”

We spread the brand message with an email broadcast directing people to new web pages describing our public service campaigns. The homepage features a new “Get Involved” button. In our highly trafficked web Job Line, we created new Volunteer Opportunities listings for each of our three public service campaigns. Volunteers can sign up by emailing committee chairs directly from the project descriptions. **(Exhibits: [austinadfed.com](http://austinadfed.com) Volunteer Pages)**

The web homepage has a link to the newsletter subscription form, which has a space for people to volunteer. The form is sent to several officers, including the volunteer coordinator, who contacts potential volunteers by phone and email. In each newsletter the *Letter from the*

*President* speaks to the value of volunteering, with hyperlinks to the volunteer web pages  
**(Exhibits: Newsletters)**

**Volunteer Results:** *An Embarrassment of Riches*

The response has been overwhelming, with several dozen new volunteers steered to pro-bono campaigns. We get one or two new volunteers per week off the newsletter subscription form. It's been a bit of a task, hooking up all the new requests with ongoing committees. Fortunately, after interviewing several candidates, we finally have a highly motivated and effective volunteer coordinator who works closely with the university ad club's volunteer coordinators. The end result is an unprecedented number of new volunteers working on club projects like the ADDY Awards and our public service campaigns. **(Exhibit: Volunteer List, HCRA, AFTS Contact Lists)**

**Objective 4:** *Expand sponsorship opportunities and increase income.*

**Sponsorship Background:** *Tough Sell*

The toughest hurdle in selling sponsorships was selling the idea of “selling” to board members. Our board members represent a broad range of disciplines in advertising, but few actually have experience selling. Previous year's attempts to teach them to sell were completely ineffective. We had to resign ourselves to the understanding that it takes a special kind of person to sell effectively, and our best solution was to recruit a salesperson for the position.

**Sponsorship Solution:** *Hooking the Prospect.*

This year we succeeded in landing a talented salesperson, publisher of *Celebrate Austin*, a visitor's guide placed in 25,000 Austin hotel rooms. She updated existing sponsorship collateral with the pitch, “Get known as *That Genius up in Marketing*—become an ADDY Sponsor.” She went on to stress the benefits of positioning the sponsor's company in front of an exclusive, hard-to-reach decision-making audience of 600 to 800 ad industry leaders who (as she closed her sales pitch) can only be found under one roof at the ADDYs.

We also began selling luncheon sponsorships for the first time, offering a lobby table, a banner, a newsletter display ad, and several minutes on stage. Our Sponsorship Chair will contribute to plans for underwriting Cultural Diversity/Ad Education mentors for minority high school students.

**Sponsorship Results:** *Closing the Deal.*

Despite getting a late start, we equaled or exceeded last year's ADDY sponsorship levels: \$5,250 in cash sponsorships, and nearly \$42,000 of in-kind sponsorships **(Exhibit: Sponsors)**.

We secured two luncheon sponsors, and are negotiating for future sponsorships. Most importantly, we have a talented salesperson getting an early start on next year's ADDYs.

**Object 5:** *Refine "housekeeping" duties: financial reports, accounting practices, database maintenance, membership renewal, board agendas, communications, and meeting practices.*

**Housekeeping Results:**

- New financial reports present data more clearly and are emailed to board members before meetings. (**Exhibit: Financial Reports**)
- New Treasurer position is filled by a former accountant. She assisted Executive Director staff in standardizing money-handling procedures, accounting processes, and financial reports. She uncovered a double payment of \$7,000, and secured a refund.
- Executive Director staff received additional training on maintaining the database, reaching new levels of accuracy and effectiveness. They continue to contact members by mail, email, and phone, with a high percentage of renewals (83.4% over the last 12 months). Special attention is given to recruiting new volunteers and non-renewing members.
- Agendas are emailed in advance of meetings. Minutes and committee updates are emailed a week later. It's an extremely full agenda, and board members are becoming very skilled at getting through it (**Exhibit: February Agenda**). In his nine years of board service, the president has never seen attendance levels higher or committee leaders as active as on this board.
- Improved meetings and events begin with improved communication to members. Our new event software creates more attractive invitations than standard email, and allows for online registration and automated follow-up (**Exhibit: Meet the Judges invitation**). Improved meeting practices include a Membership team to welcome guests, registrant and board nametags, and recognition for event sponsors.

**Objective 6:** *Improve leadership development.*

**Leadership Background:** *Filling the Vacuum*

Several years of strong presidents serving two-year terms led to complacency about leadership development. This culminated in a crisis this year: none of the vice-presidents were able to step up to assume the presidency. The recruiting committee was forced to strong-arm a former president into returning to the position. After nine years of board service, that person had gradually reduced his board commitment to non-voting associate status, and planned on

resigning the board to continue work on public service projects. He was not prepared to assume the responsibility of presidency, but stepped into the office anyway. He really had no choice.

**Leadership Development Solution:** *Look to the Long Term*

One of the new president's first tasks was setting the goals outlined in this report, including leadership development. He began by immediately discussing leadership options with the vice presidents, and securing their commitment to a multi-year training and promotion process. While this initiative exceeded the president's traditional input into recruiting new leadership, the crisis situation warranted decisive action. The executive committee, composed of the president and vice presidents, will now make recommendations to the nominating committee. Constitutionally, the nominating committee is not bound to follow those recommendations, but we expect they will.

A second initiative undertaken by the president was the recruiting of new board members. Several of the nominating committee's new board members were woefully unprepared for board service. Several were brand new club members, who had only expressed an interest in volunteering. Lack of an effective volunteer program meant there was really no place to put them, the nominating committee believed, except on the board. That proved to be a mistake. The president worked closely with those board members to improve their work. Failing that, he asked them to resign.

A third initiative is proposing to members a constitutional amendment creating a new position: Vice President of Cultural Diversity. Members will vote to approve the amendment at the annual business meeting during the June Big Wig Awards luncheon, our second largest event. By promoting the Cultural Diversity Chair to Vice President, we will allocate club resources and set priorities that will produce measurable results in the coming year. We hope to set an example of commitment to diversity that will be followed by other clubs in District 10.

**Leadership Results:** *Succession Process Secured*

The president recruited several new board members who added significantly to board strength and increased diversity: one is a tenured faculty member at UT, one is the Community Relations Director at a local TV station (we had no broadcast board members), one is an African-American woman who is a leader of the Cultural Diversity Committee, one is an Hispanic woman who led an exceptionally successful press relations for the public service Art From the Streets campaign, and one is an Asian woman who is the new UT student ad club president. These new members are working out well, and several are in the pipeline to assume committee

chair positions, vice presidencies, and eventually, the presidency. The Executive Committee expects most board members to return next year, and will direct the Nominating Committee to re-appoint them.

Throughout the year, the president has worked closely with his successor, the VP of Programs, to make sure he is well prepared. This includes copying the VP on all email associated with the president's duties, gradually assigning more duties to the VP, and regular progress/strategy meetings to plan for the coming year.

## **2 B How did you achieve your objectives as they relate to analysis of member needs?**

*Develop improved survey tools and promote volunteer opportunities.*

**Survey Background:** *Is anyone out there?*

For years we occasionally used simple paper surveys collected at monthly luncheons. These provided little useful information. We relied on anecdotal information from our members.

**Survey Solution:** *We Have the Technology.*

To correct this situation we researched and purchased online event invitation/registration software from Cvent that includes survey tools. As we learn to use it, VPs and chairs will collaborate in developing survey questions to assist their committees.

**Survey Results:** *Work in Progress*

We used the Cvent software for event invitations, particularly the many ADDY emails. (**Exhibit:** Cvent Invitations). We are currently producing an ADDY satisfaction survey (**Exhibit:** ADDY Survey). We will use the results to evaluate and plan next year's ADDYs and to recruit new ADDY Committee members.

**Conclusion:** *Planning for the Future.*

We use the Club Achievement process as a tool for evaluating our practice and progress. The reports are available for download on our website, and board members are directed to use them early and often. In writing this report, the president was pleased to see that we had achieved many of the goals mentioned in last year's report. This year's report will form the basis for much of our planning in the months to come.

We have many reasons to be proud of our work and standing in the ad community. We are meeting the objectives listed at the beginning of this report, and more. To recap those goals in terms of objectives met, we are seeing:

1. A new commitment to goal setting and planning that stretches over multiple years.

2. A new commitment to promoting cultural diversity on the board and in committees.
3. An unprecedented surge in volunteer activity leading to improved membership renewal, increased revenue for our public service clients, improved variety of and attendance at our social and educational programs.
4. Improved sponsorship and fundraising development.
5. Improved financial reporting, accounting practices, and communication with members.
6. A skilled set of leaders waiting to move into new positions of responsibility.