

Share & Reapply: Spotlight on Success

Inspiring Excellence in AFP Chapters

At AFP Interior BC Chapter, we believe in the power of sharing success stories to inspire and elevate our community of fundraising professionals. One of our proudest moments this year was the success of our Daring to Dream Big conference.

About the Daring to Dream Big Conference: The Daring to Dream Big conference was an in-person, one-day event, which was held this year at a nearby university. We kicked things off with a welcome reception, which included coffee, breakfast, and the chance to mingle and connect. Our esteemed keynote speaker, Jeff Sodowsky, VP of Global Philanthropic, then took the stage to set an inspiring tone for the day. The program included several breakout sessions as well, with notable figures such as Vincent Duckworth from the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada, and local experts including Matt Stewart, an inclusive leadership facilitator and TEDx speaker, and Andrew Greer and Jude Brunt from Purrrpl (a local organization, based out of Kelowna).

A highlight of the day was the thought-provoking screening of “Uncharitable”, a powerful documentary that exposes the challenges within philanthropy and advocates for transformative change in charitable practices. The day concluded with a celebratory social, allowing attendees to reflect on their new insights and connect with like-minded peers.

- **Objective:** The AFP Interior BC's Daring to Dream Big mini-conference aimed to create a meaningful and inspiring educational experience for everyone — seasoned nonprofit professionals, newcomers to the industry, and anyone passionate about engaging with the nonprofit community.

Our primary goal was to create an event that was accessible to everyone, considering cost, timing, and meaningful content. Enhancing member value and attracting new members are two key strategic objectives for our chapter, and we believe this event was a valuable investment of our resources and time to achieve these goals.

- **Key Strategies:** We employed the following key strategies to achieve our goal:
 - **Venue selection:** We wanted to ensure we selected a venue that was accessible to everyone. Given that our chapter has members all over the Interior of British Columbia, Canada (with the largest member base in Kelowna), the event needed to be held in a location that was readily accessible for all. We decided to hold the conference at the Kelowna University of BC Okanagan campus (which is located at the north end of Kelowna) making it easy for attendees from nearby towns to join us.
 - **Speaker Engagement:** Securing noteworthy speakers was a main goal of ours. Two of our esteemed speakers were flown in from Vancouver, British Columbia and Calgary, Alberta to provide merit for attendees.

- **Event duration:** Timing of the event was also very important to us. We know that time is of value, so we scheduled the event to be long enough to provide valuable insights and short enough to avoid interrupting their work lives
- **Registration costs:** Making sure that registration fees were affordable was a big concern for us. We didn't want anyone to miss out due to costs, so we invited anyone with any financial barriers to reach out to us in confidence. Securing several key sponsors and in-kind partners also allowed us to keep our costs down.
- **Social Connection:** Another goal of ours was to ensure we provided ample opportunity for attendees to connect with one another and/or make new friends. Both our welcome breakfast reception and optional social provided opportunities for participants to interact with one another.
- **Results:** We were incredibly pleased with the outcome of this Daring to Dream Big conference. We had hoped to invite 50 attendees and ended up with almost 70 attendees, including speakers.

Our post-event survey indicated that guests really enjoyed themselves and found great value in the educational opportunities, which was our hope from the very beginning. Given that we have a fairly small chapter and a small planning committee, we were really touched by feedback from participants. Guests left the day feeling empowered, inspired, and hopefully having made a few new connections!

We have even been approached by a larger AFP chapter to perhaps consider co-hosting a larger conference next year and we're thrilled at the chance of making this a reality!

How You Can Replicate our Dare to Dream Big Event: We believe that the success of our event can be replicated by other AFP chapters. Here are the key steps to consider:

1. **Put Together a Planning Committee:** We had a small planning committee (consisting of three AFP Interior BC board members) that met on a regular basis. Any major decisions were also shared with our board of directors during our monthly board meetings to ensure we were offering the best possible outcomes.
2. **Decide on a Theme:** Our main goal was to decide on a theme that would inspire attendees to join, but more importantly, would allow them to learn something meaningful. One of our team members suggested an AFP global trends article by Vincent Duckworth, recognizing its potential value for our audience. We grew this idea and decided to call the conference, 'Daring to Dream Big' to reflect what we had hoped our attendees would be inspired to do.
3. **Select Engaging Speakers:** It was an obvious choice to invite Vincent Duckworth (President and CEO of ViTreo and Chair of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada) as one of our esteemed speakers, given that our theme originated from his article. Our next goal was to find a keynote speaker that would attract attendees. After one of our board members returned from AFP ICON and suggested Jeff Sodowsky (VP, Global Philanthropic) as a potential speaker, we

extended an invitation to him as well. With both of them on board, we sought to include local representation to ensure diverse and relevant content for our audience.

4. **Plan a Balanced Schedule:** In addition to our speakers, we aimed to provide extra value by ensuring ample food and beverages were readily available. Guests enjoyed a breakfast reception, coffee and pastry breaks, and an optional social gathering. The balance of speakers, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities was well-received and appreciated by attendees.
5. **Add a Unique Touch:** A special highlight of the event was the screening of “Uncharitable”. Initially considered for a separate event, we decided it would be a perfect addition to our mini-conference. Attendees were invited to watch the film in the afternoon, with complimentary popcorn and a small open conversation afterward.
6. **Share Your Success:** Once you've achieved success with your event, share your results, best practices, and lessons learned with other chapters and the AFP community.

Get Started Today: We encourage you to consider adopting a similar event to make a positive impact on your chapter and community. Together, we can continue to elevate the fundraising profession and create lasting change.

Let's share success, inspire change, and make a difference together.