



YPN Chapter Start-Up Kit

For Local and State REALTOR® Associations



Energize the Future of the Real Estate Industry

Young professionals are the future of the real estate business. But in a field where the average age is 52, younger real estate practitioners often strive for a way to connect with each other and tap into valuable resources that will help them succeed in business.

REALTOR® Magazine launched the Young Professionals Network in 2006 as a way to help the younger generation of REALTORS® build a stronger link with the magazine and the real estate industry, in general.

Through national networking events, a lively blog, and an information-packed Web site, REALTOR® Magazine's Young Professionals Network gives its members the tools they need to advance their careers — and have fun in the process!

Many state and local REALTOR® associations have recently expressed an interest in starting their own YPN chapter. If you're one of those associations, this kit is designed just for you. From planning group activities, to promoting your events, and getting a sponsor to support you, this kit will help you energize the young professionals of your real estate market.

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	3
Members Benefits	4
Association Benefits	5
History of YPN	6
Member Snapshot	7
First Steps: Starting Your YPN Chapter.....	8
Chapter Responsibilities & Guidelines	9
Submitting Your Annual Report & Chapter of the Year Award	10-11
YPN Logo Usage	12
How to Become a Recognized Chapter	13
Planning Your Events: 20 Ideas	14
Promoting Your Events	15
Paying For Your Events	16
Contact Us	17

YPN Mission Statement

YPN is a member-driven organization that helps young real estate professionals excel in their careers by giving them the tools and encouragement to become involved in four core areas:

- **REALTOR® associations.** Attend REALTOR® conferences and pursue leadership roles with their local, state, and national associations.
- **Real estate industry.** Take an active role in policy discussions and advocacy issues; be informed about the latest industry news and trends.
- **Peers.** Network and learn from one another by attending events, participating in online communication, and seeking out mentoring opportunities.
- **Community.** Become exceptional members of their community by setting a high level of REALTOR® professionalism and volunteering for causes they feel passionate about.

If you're as excited as we are about furthering this mission, you've already accomplished the first step to starting a YPN chapter!

Key Member Benefits

Why should REALTORS® join YPN?

- **Exclusive invitations to YPN events.** YPN events are a fun way for members to meet other real estate professionals from around the country, build a referral network, and learn about new and free resources from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.
- **Stay abreast of industry happenings.** Through a lively blog, an information-packed Web site, and networking events, members stay in the loop on hot issues facing the real estate industry. YPN also has special educational sessions at REALTOR® conferences that address strategies for success in real estate.
- **Have your own sounding board.** Young professionals have unique challenges in real estate—and they also face challenges shared by all practitioners. By belonging to a network of peers who face similar issues, they can bounce ideas off of one another and provide support to each other.
- **Get involved.** Many people who are new to the industry want to get involved with their local, state, or national association of REALTORS®, but they either don't know how to go about it or they find it too intimidating. YPN encourages them to explore leadership opportunities across the board.

Sign up for YPN national membership at www.realtor.org/ypn (click on “Get in the Network”).

Key Association Benefits

When young members get involved, the REALTOR® organization reaps rewards. Here are some reasons why your REALTOR® organization should support YPN.

- **New generation of leaders.** Cultivate the next generation of your REALTOR® association's leaders.
- **Represent all members.** Ensure your association's industry interests are well-represented among all age groups and experience levels.
- **Tap new ideas and fresh perspectives.** Home buyers are getting younger and the real estate industry continues to evolve. Younger generations can offer unique perspectives to meet the changing demand in the business.



2009 NAR President Charles McMillan with YPN's first Advisory Board at the 2008 Midyear Meetings in Washington, D.C.

History of YPN: Important Milestones

How and why did REALTOR® Magazine create YPN, and how has it evolved to where it is today? By taking a quick look at the history of YPN, it can help you identify important steps for your chapter.

- **An idea is born.** In 2006, REALTOR® Magazine sought to build off of the momentum of its popular "30 Under 30" feature (www.realtor.org/30under30), which recognizes rising stars in real estate. With so many young people joining the real estate business, the magazine wanted to help members of the new generation feel a closer tie to the magazine, to each other, and to the greater REALTOR® community.
- **Our first event.** During the 2006 REALTORS® Conference & Expo in New Orleans, REALTOR® Magazine invited "30 Under 30" honorees and other registered attendees to a networking reception for a fast-paced game of speed networking. The overwhelming response: Attendees wanted more of YPN! We have since held a networking party at every REALTORS® Conference & Expo.
- **Online home created.** In October 2007, REALTOR® Magazine created the YPN Web site (www.realtor.org/YPN) as a way to share articles, resources, and links geared to the younger audience. We asked our readers to officially become members. Membership is free; REALTORS® simply have to submit an online form. In less than a year, YPN had nearly 1,500 members and counting!
- **Let the blogging begin.** The "YPN Lounge" blog (www.realtor.org/ypnlounge) began in January 2008 as the "online meeting place" for young real estate professionals. About 20 YPN members regularly contribute, ensuring the blog is lively and well read.
- **Events take off.** YPN events, funded entirely by sponsors, consistently draw hundreds of REALTORS® and are booked to capacity—often requiring a waiting list for those who didn't RSVP fast enough. Needless to say, the events now have a reputation as the hottest party at REALTOR® conferences. NAR's 2008 President Dick Gaylord, while speaking at a Board of Directors meeting, referred to YPN as one of the most exciting events at the conference!
- **YPN advisory board assembled.** A team of 7 successful YPN members comprise the advisory board (<http://www.realtor.org/archives/ypnadvisorybios>), formed in January 2008. The board meets semiannually, and also communicates via e-mail and conference call. The board recommends YPN educational sessions for conferences, provides insights to NAR leadership when requested, and offers overall direction for YPN.
- **Educational sessions at convention.** YPN sponsored its first education session at the 2008 REALTOR® Midyear Legislative Meetings: "Marketing Strategies That Work," featuring a panel of Gen Y and Gen X YPN members. The standing-room-only crowd was proof that we should offer sessions at every conference.
- **Awards & recognition.** In 2008, YPN won a Folio Fame Award for its events and won two awards (Society of National Association Publications, and the American Society of Business Publication Editors) for its online community.

YPN Member Snapshot

In 2008, YPN conducted its first survey to find out what our members want. REALTOR® Magazine e-mailed the survey to 421 YPN members and received 432 responses—more than a 100 percent response rate, thanks to the “forward to a friend” feature. We're sharing these results with you so that you can cater your chapter's events and activities to members' interests:

- Over half of respondents (57%) have been a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® for between one and 5 years.
- Seventy-six percent (76%) hold a sales agent license.
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) are interested in being matched with a mentor in the real estate industry, while another thirty-one percent (31%) would consider this option in the future.
- Seventy-one percent (71%) are interested in volunteering within their local, state, or national association. Volunteer focus areas with the greatest interest are: Education (52%), Habitat for Humanity (51%), Housing (49%), Communications (36%), and Law & Ethics (33%).
- The twenty-nine percent (29%) that indicate no interest in volunteering were asked what prevents them from volunteering. The top two reasons given were “too busy” (56%) and/or family obligations (40%).
- All respondents were asked to rate their interest in several NAR issues. The scale was 1-4, where 4 is very interested. The top three issues of interest were: Preventing predatory lending and limiting foreclosures (3.42); Affordable health insurance options for REALTORS® (3.41); and Mortgage interest deduction (3.36).
- Over half of respondents are likely to attend one of the following YPN events in the future: Guest/expert speaker session (80%); Happy hour (59%); Roundtable discussions with peers (55%); Webinar (54%).
- Respondents were asked what topics they would like to see covered at a future YPN event. The top five topics selected were: Sales & marketing ideas (88%), Business development (78%), Technology (67%), Relationship building (60%), and Personal finance (57%).
- Respondents would like to see local association YPN chapters that are committed to networking or hosting group meetings. Other suggestions for YPN endeavors include: online seminars, Webinars, a YPN directory, and true stories on getting started and succeeding in real estate.
- The majority of respondents indicate that their preferred method for receiving YPN news and event information is e-mail (93%).

First Steps: Starting Your YPN Chapter

- 1. See what's already out there.** Make sure a YPN chapter doesn't already exist in your market area. Check with the local and state REALTOR® associations. We also have a list of young professionals groups throughout the country (<http://www.realtor.org/archives/ypnregionalgroups>). If there's a similar group, you may want to consider joining forces.
- 2. Send us an e-mail.** Let us know you're interested in starting up a YPN chapter: ypn@realtors.org. We can share any information we know about groups in the area, and answer any of your questions.
- 3. Gauge interest with a kick-off event.** Plan a networking event and publicize it to your target audience. Your association's news e-mails and member magazines are great promotion vehicles. Use your creativity and knowledge of your target audience to reach young members. (YPN national also can help publicize your events, see page 15.) Use nametags and fun, nonintimidating icebreakers to get attendees warmed up. A free event will maximize attendance.
- 4. Talk to attendees.** Ask what people want from a local YPN chapter and if they're interested in getting involved in planning future events. It takes more than one or two people to form a thriving YPN chapter. Get a core group of young professionals excited about the idea so you can count on them to plan and spread the word about future events.
- 5. Form a contact list.** Collect business cards at your event; Be sure you have e-mail addresses and contact information of all your attendees so you can follow up and start building a bigger network. **At least 15 active members are required to start and maintain a chapter.** Collect phone numbers, address, e-mail address, and company from your members for your database.
- 6. Build your base.** Once you have 15 active members, you're on your way to becoming a YPN chapter. Get recognized by YPN national as an official chapter by sending us such information as your city or state; the main contact person for your group; number of members to date; details about your first event or group activities scheduled. (*See page 13 for more information.*)
- 7. Boost the group's recognition with a logo.** YPN has a special logo that all recognized chapters can freely use. The logo provides a visual tie with the YPN national, yet also prominently identifies the local or state chapter.
- 8. Form a local advisory board.** YPN is a member driven organization, and the advisory board is critical in promoting and planning YPN events, raising your profile in the community, and keeping your group active and thriving. Board members should have designated roles: Chair—responsible for overseeing YPN meetings and serve as main spokesperson for your group; Membership director—in charge of recruitment and maintaining member database; Events director—planning and coordinating YPN activities and reaching out to potential sponsors; Communications director—promoting YPN activities and responding to YPN inquiries. Eventually your group may get to the size to break out into committees focused on different areas, such as planning events, sponsor outreach, and community service.
- 9. Plot out your goals, plan future events.** Decide how often you want to hold events; This will be determined both by how much time your YPN leadership team can devote to planning, as well as how often members will want to meet. Set dates far in advance so you have ample time to find sponsors, recruit speakers, and plan for an event that will invigorate your young members.

Responsibilities & Guidelines

1. Professionalism. As a network of young professionals that are members of the REALTOR® organization, it's important to set high standards for your chapter's events and activities. Maintain professionalism in all of your communications—whether in person or via e-mail—and keep the focus of events on how to help members succeed in business.

2. Free Membership. YPN does not charge members to join, and local and state chapters are expected to follow suit.

3. No Age Restrictions. While most members of YPN are under 40 (based on our survey results), there is no age restriction whatsoever. Any REALTOR® who thinks he or she would benefit from membership is welcome to join.

4. Use of Logo. By using the official YPN Chapter logo, you will benefit from the brand recognition that YPN national has already created.

5. Cross-promotion of YPN Events. YPN national will gladly promote your local or state chapter events on its Web site and Facebook page, and, in turn, we hope you will promote the YPN national events through your regular communications with YPN members.

6. Responsible use of member e-mail addresses, contact info. YPN national can provide you with the contact information of members in our database who live in your area. In return, please share names of your members to make them members of YPN national. YPN upholds a policy of not selling member contact information to any third party, including event sponsors. Chapters must agree to do the same.

7. Be Active. YPN Chapters should hold events on a regular basis, whether it's semiannually, monthly, or even weekly. We ask that you plan at least two events a year (such as a networking event, meetings, education sessions, Webinars, etc.)

8. Maintain membership of 15 or above. To form a YPN chapter, we ask that you have at least 15 members. By sustaining at least 15 members, you'll have enough people to work at spreading the word about your group and helping it to grow.

9. Submit an annual report. Keep YPN national in the loop with an annual report of your chapter's membership count, events, and plans for the future. More details are on the following page.

10. Further the YPN mission. Your YPN chapter should aim to further the mission of YPN, engaging members through their association, the real estate industry, with peers, and in their communities.

11. Do not infringe on other YPN Chapters territories. Only one YPN chapter can exist in your local area. Local and state YPN Chapters are allowed for membership. But if a local YPN chapter is already based in your geographical area, we ask that you partner with them and work together to form one stronger YPN in your community.

If your group has acted in an inappropriate, unprofessional way, it will no longer be recognized as a YPN Chapter. These guidelines are a work-in-progress and can be updated and changed at any time.

Your Annual Report

Each Chapter is required to submit an annual report to YPN national by **March 31** of each year. The report will be reviewed by the YPN Advisory Board and is a way to keep a pulse on the activities of each YPN. See the Annual Report guidelines on page 11 for details on what it should include.

YPN Chapter of the Year Award

Your chapter's Annual Report will be used to select the YPN Chapter of the Year, which will be awarded in recognition of a chapter whose efforts and creativity sparked engagement of its members in one or more of YPN's four key mission areas. The YPN Chapter of the Year will be recognized at the YPN annual networking party during the REALTOR® Conference & Expo and an article about your group will be featured on the YPN Web site and YPN Lounge blog.

The YPN Chapter of the Year Award will be selected by the YPN national Advisory Board.

What Your Annual Report Should Include

Your report should be submitted to ypn@realtors.org (e-mail subject line: [Year] YPN Annual Report: [Chapter Name]).

Please include the following information in your report:

[YEAR] YPN Annual Report

Chapter name:

Number of members:

Officers and contact information:

Web site (if applicable):

What is one of the biggest goals your chapter accomplished this year:

Please identify an obstacle your chapter currently faces (Your responses will help guide YPN national in what content and resources are needed.):

Provide details of any events or outreach you did the past year. Feel free to include any photos, supporting letters from members, or any additional information to show your chapter's success in your activities.

Outline your group's goals for next year (e.g. events and outreach that you plan to do, membership goals, etc.).

Using the YPN Logo

For recognized YPN chapters: We encourage you to use the official YPN logo to strengthen your local brand and raise its presence among REALTORS®.



YPN promotes the professional advancement of young real estate professionals throughout the industry. The YPN logo demonstrates that your Chapter is approved by REALTOR® Magazine's Young Professional Network and a recognized YPN partner. Proper use of the YPN logo is important for recognition of your Chapter.

The YPN logo is the main element of recognition of the YPN brand and therefore, must be reproduced consistently. The logo should not be altered or repropotioned in any way.

Recognized Chapters of YPN can reproduce the logo on its Web site, booklets, marketing pieces, and publications that support advancing young real estate professionals in the industry and support's YPN's overall mission.

A JPG (or other format, available upon request) of the YPN logo will be sent to you, once you are approved for chapter membership.

How to Become a Recognized Chapter

1. Send an e-mail to ypn@realtors.org (e-mail subject line: YPN Chapter Application: [Enter state/local name])

2. Your e-mail should contain an attached Word document with the following information.

- Chapter Name:
- Main contact:
- Address:
- E-mail (to be listed on YPN Web site for your group):
- Main phone number (for publication on YPN Web site):
- Number of members in your chapter:
- Names, contact information, and e-mail addresses of at least 15 members from your group:

You must have at least 15 members before you can become a recognized chapter of YPN.

NOTE: *Your submitted members' names and contact information (including e-mail address), will be added to the YPN national contact database so that they also receive event and resources from YPN national. When you submit these 15 names, you are ensuring that they have agreed to become members of YPN national as well.*

Once your chapter is approved, YPN national will send a welcome e-mail to your members, which will include valuable career resources (including the Rookie Survival Guide, links to the YPN Lounge blog and YPN national Web site, and additional links to other resources for young professionals by REALTOR® magazine).

- Please list any officers (and their titles, based on how you would like it to appear on the YPN Web site for your group):
- Web site (if applicable):
- Please outline your kickoff event, activity, or outreach you plan to do in the first year to spread the word about your group:
- Why do you feel a YPN chapter is needed in your area:
- What are your goals for your chapter and what do you hope to achieve with your YPN chapter:

3. The YPN Advisory Board will approve all requests to become a recognized chapter of YPN. Please allow up to 8 weeks for approval.

Planning Your Events: 20 Ideas to Get You Started

It's time to get young real estate professionals excited and engaged in the real estate industry and community. Here are some activities that will help you reach that goal:

1. Organize a Habitat for Humanity volunteer project.
2. Host monthly or quarterly happy hour networking events.
3. Sponsor a real estate workshop or seminar on a topic that would interest your members. Topics may include: Rookie Survival Guide, How to Create a Referral Network, Building a Personal Marketing Plan. Invite interesting speakers and mentors to cover the topics.
4. Host a Webinar. Topics may include those listed above.
5. Sponsor and help plan an education session at your local or state REALTOR® association convention.
6. Host a speed networking event: Provide conversation-starter cue cards at every table, then partner people up to talk for 1-3 minutes at a time. Ring a bell, and one of the partners switches to a new table.
7. Hold a potluck BBQ. Ask members to bring their favorite dish. Reserve a spot at a public park, or ask the local REALTOR® association or brokerages to be "host" by letting YPN use their outdoor grounds. Include games like beanbag toss and horseshoes—keep it fun and casual.
8. Wine tasting.
9. Form a YPN book club that meets once a month to talk about the latest real estate books. Each member can be assigned to read a different book, and then share the main tips from that book in 5 minutes or less. It's a time-saver that will benefit everyone! (Not sure what to read? Get ideas from REALTOR® magazine's Weekly Book Scan blog: www.realtor.org/weeklybookscan.)
10. Host open house tours. Band together to do an open house caravan tour of the area.
11. Host a charity event for a community cause.
12. Tourney time: Organize a golf tournament, bowling tournament, softball tournament, etc. Invite local REALTOR® association leadership, as well as other community leaders.
13. Plan a mentor meet-up event, in which you invite people who are willing to mentor and people who would like a mentor.
14. Host a luncheon with a motivational speaker or real estate coach. Hold the lunch at different members' offices. Topics can include negotiation skills, life balance, beating burnout, marketing ideas, and more.
15. Conduct an e-mail survey of your members to determine their main interests, which will provide your group direction.
16. Create a sponsorship or awards program, such as a competitive scholarship to attend a REALTOR® conference.
17. Host job fairs for new licensees or college students considering a career in real estate. Visit local high schools to encourage younger generations to pursue a career in real estate and serve as mentors.
18. Attend a sporting event in your community. Seek out group rates.
19. Start a Facebook or MySpace page for your group and reach out online.
20. Plan a joint event with other industries' young professional groups.

Promoting Your Events

Once you've planned a spectacular event, be sure that everyone finds out about it. Here are some promotional ideas.

- Contact your local or state REALTOR® association to get an announcement in their newsletter or magazine.
- Post an announcement on the YPN wall at the YPN group Facebook page. (We also encourage you to share photos after your event on the YPN group Facebook).
- Contact YPN national (ypn@realtors.org) to get a link to information on your event on the YPN Web site.
- Write a blog entry for the YPN Lounge blog about your event (e-mail: ypn@realtors.org).
- Promote your event on real estate blogs in your area. Check out ActiveRain to find some in your area.
- Post information about your event on local Web sites and your company's intranet.
- Reach out to other real estate businesses in your area and ask if they can promote the event in their office.
- Send a personal invitation to your colleagues and those who you want to recruit for your group. They'll be flattered at the personal invitation and may be more likely to attend.
- Buy a classified ad in your local newspaper encouraging those interested to be apart of your group to contact you.
- Post announcements around your community, including on bulletin boards at grocery stores and libraries, chamber of commerce, and your local REALTOR® association.
- Send a letter to brokers of real estate companies in your area telling them about the event and encouraging them to invite their young and newer agents.
- Use networking sites such as Meetup.com to find other real estate professionals and allow them to find you. Have a page on Meetup.com dedicated to your group and notifying members about events.

5 Ways We Can Help Publicize Your Group

1. We may be able to offer you a list of members who live in your area.
2. We can host a basic Web page for your group at REALTOR® Magazine Online, which will be linked from the YPN Web site. Your group's Web page will include one photo, a list of officers, an "About Us" section, a contact list, and related links. It also can list upcoming events.
3. We can give you permission to use the official YPN logo to strengthen your local brand and raise its presence among REALTORS®. Please contact ypn@realtors.org to receive approval for use of logo.
4. We can give you the opportunity to blog about your chapter on the YPN Lounge.
5. An officer from your YPN chapter will be invited to participate in conference calls with the YPN Advisory Board to stay up to date with what other YPN groups are up to and share ideas.

Paying for Your Events: Finding Sponsors

Don't have the money to host an event? Getting a sponsor can be a great way to connect your network with companies that offer products and services, while also covering the costs of your event.

1. **What do you want from the sponsor?** Sponsorship can come in different forms—financial, services, promotional, equipment, venue, prizes, etc. Consider what you want for your event and take into the account the value of each.
2. **Determine the benefits of sponsorship.** What will sponsors get for their money? For example, you can give them a table at the networking event, allow them to speak briefly to the group, acknowledge them in all promotional pieces, provide a link to their Web site from your site, or allow product demonstrations at the event. Develop a sponsorship plan that details what you will be providing sponsors for their contributions. In that form, include a description of the event, projections of attendees, goals of the event, benefits of sponsorship, and pricing levels.
3. **Brainstorm potential sponsors.** Identify companies that have an interest in reaching your audience. Come up with a list of possible sponsors to target. Investigate these company's Web sites so you'll be familiar enough with the company or organization when you talk to them and will be able to talk directly about the benefits to them for sponsorship.
4. **Reach out to sponsors.** Call the companies on your list to talk about the sponsorship opportunity. Use your networks to reach out when you can. Provide details about the event and the audience, and follow up a few days later to see if they have any questions. Provide a deadline of when you need a response.
5. **Be willing to negotiate.** A sponsor may want to negotiate the price and benefits. Be realistic about what you are offering and determine the minimum sponsorship you'll be willing to accept. Consider repackaging the proposal for certain sponsors who seek other benefits.
6. **Be respectful, even when you get a firm no.** Even if their answer is no, be sure to thank potential sponsors and keep the lines of communication open. You may be able to approach them next year.
7. **Have an agreement in writing.** If they agree to sponsorship, document all the terms and benefits in a letter. Then, have the party sign it and keep it in your files. This way they know what they're getting for their sponsorship money and you have a written agreement to what you will be providing in return.
8. **Designate a point-person.** Give the sponsor a single person to contact to avoid confusion, and vice-versa; ask for the main contact on their side.
9. **Acknowledge the sponsor.** Be sure to give your sponsors visible recognition for their contribution and make sure your members are aware of them. Include a logo, link to sponsor's Web site, or company's name in promotions of your event.
10. **Follow up after the event.** Let the sponsor know you appreciated their support, and that you hope to work with them again in the future.



REALTOR® Magazine
Young
Professionals
Network
www.REALTOR.org/ypn

Contact Us

If you have any questions, please contact any of the REALTOR® Magazine staff members listed below or send an e-mail to ypn@realtors.org.

YPN Staff Liaisons

Melissa Dittmann Tracey
Associate Multimedia Editor, REALTOR® magazine
mtracey@realtors.org

Allison Fitch-Markham
Manager, Promotions and Marketing, REALTOR® magazine
Afitch-markham@realtors.org

Mailing Address

Young Professionals Network
REALTOR® magazine
430 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611

2008 YPN Advisory Board

Heidi Fore, chair
Keller Williams Realty-East
Louisville, Ky. 40222
Heidi@heidifore.com

Alexander R. Chaparro
@properties
Chicago, IL 60642
alexchaparro@atproperties.com

Shannon Williams King
TriBella Realty
Austin, Texas 78705
ShannonWilliams@TribellaRealty.com

James W. Nellis II
RE/MAX Allegiance
Washington, D.C. 20007
james@remax.net

Kenny Parcell
RE/MAX Results – SF
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660
Kenny@kennyparcell.com

Ian M. Phipps
Phipps Realty
Warwick, RI 02886
ian@phippsrealty.com