

# Writing a Component-Based Best Practice

Contributed by the AIA Knowledge Resources staff

February 2008

---

*The AIA collects and disseminates Best Practices as a service to AIA members without endorsement or recommendation. Appropriate use of the information provided is the responsibility of the reader.*

---

## SUMMARY

The AIA develops Best Practices to disseminate knowledge and how-to advice to members. Along with practice-based best practices, the AIA also provides nuggets of knowledge specific to the management of AIA components. We know many components have developed extraordinary and successful programs that enhance the profession, add to AIA member credibility, and improve the value of AIA membership.

Outlined below are the general criteria for writing a successful component-based best practice. With instructions in hand, components can highlight strategies, information, programs, events, and methods for the betterment of the AIA community. If you have any questions about writing a best practice, please contact [bestpractices@aia.org](mailto:bestpractices@aia.org).

The structure for an AIA component-based Best Practice generally uses the following subheads: title, summary, background, strategy, and results.

## TITLE

The title should be short and to the point and include the name of the component.

## SUMMARY

The summary should wrap up the Best Practice in less than three sentences; think of it as an elevator speech. It should address why the program was created and when it ran, how many people participated, and that it was successful. Although the summary is brief, it should tell readers what the article will be about so they can determine if they want to read further.

## BACKGROUND

It is helpful to include background about the program or the component or about a change in the component that led to this program. This paragraph can include how many members belong to the component, how many staff members were needed to run the program, and if any special funding was

required. When writing this section, ask yourself what led to the development of this program?

## STRATEGY

The strategy section is the meat and bones of the Best Practice—the how—and can be broken into smaller subsections, if necessary. This section should take the reader step-by-step through the process of developing your program. Answer questions such as these: Who ran the program, a person or a committee? How often did the committee meet? How long did planning take? Where did the program take place? Did the program/event have sponsors? Who presented or spoke at the event, and how was that person chosen? How long did the program sessions last? Was food provided? The details help other components get a better sense of how they could adapt this type of program to their needs.

## RESULTS

The results section details how many members participated, and may include a quote from a member about the success of the program. It should state whether the program will continue. The results section should also state how the program aligns with AIA goals: Did it improve member value? Add to the credible voice? Explain the underlying motivation for giving the program and if the motivation or goal was met.

Although not necessary, the author(s) can provide contact information or a list of resources used.

## More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 21.04.04 AIA Colorado Membership Program
- 21.03.15 Government Affairs: A Model for Success
- 22.06.04 The Pillars Leadership Program of AIA Kansas City

## Key Terms

- Leadership

- American Institute of Architects
- AIA components
- Knowledge transfer