



Meetup Organizer of the Week



Jason, Organizer of the **The NY Human Resources/Human Capital Management Meetup**

Check out his awesome interview [here](#), and hear all about his great Meetup!

Jason Boltax is the Meetup Organizer of the Week for October 29 - November 4, 2007

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Good Morning! Let's keep our noses north for our next stop, New York City! I had the pleasure of meeting this week's honoree at our monthly Meetup Meetup (yes, we do attend Meetups about Meetup!)

Jason was invited to tell us about his Meetup after one of our colleagues attended his Meetup - and was particularly impressed with his flawless execution. He has kindly consented to sharing with us the secret to his Meetup success. I'm sure you'll pull away plenty of pertinent pointers so here he is...

The Meetup Organizer of the Week for October 29 - November 4, 2007 **Jason Boltax** and [The NY Human Resources/Human Capital Management Meetup](#)

Thanks so much, Jason!

1. What prompted you to start a Human Resources Meetup?

I started the NY HR/HCM group as a way to bring the NY HR community together. I started my own HR strategy consulting practice about a year ago and as an entrepreneur, I quickly realized that starting your own business can be lonely and daunting. I needed a way to keep my ear to the ground on the latest trends and best practices taking place in HR. Instead of paying a few thousand dollars to buy a glitzy industry report on the "Latest Trends in HR" I decided to find out for myself. I thought, "what would be better than bringing a few HR folks together in a room and simply asking them what they are up to, what are there greatest pain points and what are they doing about it." Overall, I love the idea of bringing people together that share interests and can work together to achieve a common goal so I started the group as a way to meet other HR professionals looking to grow their business network and knowledge base of HR as well as meeting individuals interested in learning more about the dynamic field of HR.

2. Have your expectations been realized thus far?

YES!!!! The group has developed into an amazing community of HR professionals. Our membership consists of a dynamic cross section of HR professionals which includes directors of HR, senior managers, HR consultants and strategists, business owners & c-level decisions makers and folks interested in learning more about the field. In January we had approximately 90 members and nearly one year later we have over 300. My goal for the NY HR/HCM group was to create an environment and network of HR resources where HR professionals, people interested in HR or anyone that needs help with an HR issue can turn to for advice, best practices or to find a helping hand. I am thrilled to say that this group has far surpassed all of my expectations and continue to grow and develop as a catalyst for sharing knowledge and building relationships.

3. Walk us through a typical Human Resources/Human Capital Management Meetup event.

Each event program designed to cover the latest HR trends and workforce topics facing today's organizations. But we do it with a twist. Realizing that people get together for our events after a long day of work, we do not want to bore them with the same "plastic" lectures and discussions that they've all heard a million times. So we make sure to cover these topics through an interactive and unique experience. For example, we had a program on leadership. Instead of having the usual "what is my leadership style" or "are leaders born or created" discussions, we brought in a professional storyteller. The goal of the workshop was to learn how storytelling can be used as an effective leadership tool for communication. We had a great time learning how to tell our own stories. It was a blast; we had our biggest turn out ever (40 people).

I think the main reason why our meetings are a success is organization. Our meetings are very structured. We have a formal agenda at every meeting detailing the evening's activities, so everyone knows what to expect. Here is a typical agenda:

1. Meet and Greet (6:00-6:15)

Refreshments and business card swap

2. Introductions (6:15-6:30)

2-3 minute elevator pitch about yourself and your business.

a. Name/Position/Company

b. Why did you join the NY HR/HCM Group?

c. How can YOU help the group?

d. How can NY HR/HCM help you?

3. Topic/Activity (6:30-7:30)

4. "The Advisory Board" (7:30-7:45)

This is your opportunity to bring an HR or workforce related issue to the table and receive guidance and expertise from your fellow members. Our seasoned and diverse professionals will act as your personal "Board of Directors" and help you solve any HR business issue you are facing today.

5. Networking (7:45-8:00)

This is an opportunity to talk freely with one another. We encourage you to exchange contact information, meet outside of the group and determine how each person can help one another.

4. Its obvious that you run a very polished and interesting Meetup. Are most of your members HR professionals?

We have a nice mix of people. Our membership is represented by senior hr leaders, HR generalists, HR specialists, HR consultants, HR service providers, business owners with workforce related issues and many folks that are interested in breaking into the field and wishing to learn more.

5. You've hosted several dynamic speakers for your Meetings. Where do you topic ideas emerge from and how do you go about finding corresponding speakers?

Most of the topics emerge from what's going on in the industry. As an HR consultant, I read a lot of industry periodicals so I have a good sense of the hot topics. But usually it starts with me asking my wife, "So, what should we do at the next meeting?" She is the co-founder of the group and a big proponent of the making each event fun and interactive. Most recently, I used the "Poll" functionality of the website to gather feedback on what topics to cover at future events. I found that to be very helpful.

6. Would you share with us your most memorable Meetup moment?

The most memorable was our first event, 30 people said yes and 20 actually showed up. That was a great; it really felt like we were on to something. The next best feeling was at our October event, we had 50 people RSVP and 40 people attended, and that was a great feeling.

Overall the best feeling is when we start a program and I see people really getting into it, talking to one another or working in small teams.

7. How about a few suggestions for the new or struggling Organizer hoping to make their Meetup a success.

I truly believe that the future of HR is bringing back the human element to the workplace. While outsourcing and technology is a means for efficiency, people are the necessary ingredient for success. I found that Meetup was the perfect way to hit that message home. Meetup is about people, not about "how many groups can I join" but about relationships and bringing people together that share a common goal.

So my suggestion for success as an organizer is to remember that the purpose of any group is to bring people together. But doing it successfully is not that easy. A few tips:

1. Be organized - people like joining groups when they know what they are going to do or what the group is all about. Spend the extra time, setting up your Welcome page or About Page. As an organizer it's not just about how many people join your group, it's about how active the members are.

2. Be structured - Let people know what time your are getting together, where you are meeting. Let them know what they need to bring and what they can expect when they get together. Perhaps, post a summary of past events on the site for members who couldn't make it

3. Be prepared - Make sure to choose a location that is appropriate (the back of a diner might not always be the best spot).

4. Be committed - being an organizer takes a lot of time and energy, but the results are worth it. If you are struggling with the day to day maintenance, ask for help. You would be surprised how many people want to help.

8. Where do you see your Meetup headed in the months and years to come?

I would like to see the group grow into an organization of HR professionals that can share knowledge and expertise and continue to attract the highest caliber of HR professionals.

Wanna send Jason your congratulations? Do it in the [Organizers' Forum](#).

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