



Understanding ATD Long Island Members and Events: Location and Brand Reputation Analysis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Long Island Chapter of the Association for Talent Development and Talent Metrics Consulting worked together to dive into ATD LI's data on member location and event attendance. Using an approach by Salatin & McGinty (2019), a spatial analysis was conducted. Spatial analysis allows ATD LI board members to more clearly visualize member location and opens the door for strategies to recruit and engage potential members outside of identified hotspots.

We also analyzed the effect of a speaker's company brand on event attendance. Company brand had an effect on event attendance. Recruiting speakers from recognized brands may help ATD LI boost event attendance through recognizing member interest in well-known firms, while continuing to engage speakers and companies across Long Island.

These analyses help ATD LI to better understand member behavior and make effective decisions moving forward to maximize the organization's impact. Our analyses uncovered key insights that may lead to new opportunities for members and provide a roadmap for the organization's events to make a deeper impact.

Key Recommendations

- Continue to engage members across Nassau and western Suffolk, while reaching out to members further east on Suffolk.
- Recognize the impact firm brand has on attracting members to events.
- Diversify event type to maximize impact and learning.
- Create new marketing initiatives to increase event attendance

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Spatial analysis was conducted on 45 ATD Long Island members to better understand their location and dispersion.

A clear understanding of member location and dispersion can play an important role in event scheduling. Moreover, analyzing the frequency and spatial data help us recognize where the members are located, the density of members in a given space, what is happening inside an “area of interest,” and how a specific area has changed over time (and in what way) (Martindale, n.d.).

MEMBER LOCATION STATISTICS

Table 1: MEMBER FREQUENCIES BY LONG ISLAND COUNTY

County	Frequency	Percent
Nassau	22	48
Suffolk	23	51
Total	45	100

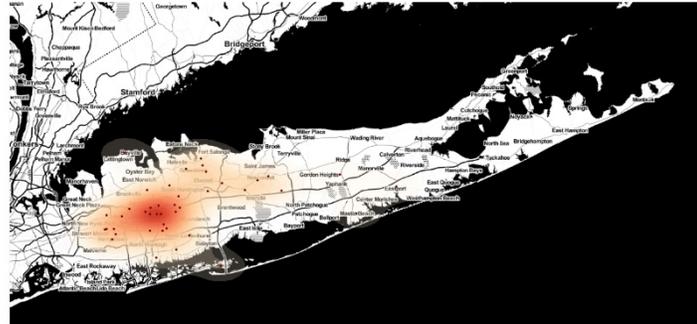
According to Table 1, ATD Long Island members were distributed rather evenly across the island’s counties, with 48% of members reporting living in Nassau Country. Despite 51% of members reporting that they live in Suffolk, many are further west, nearing Nassau County. The heat map sheds light on the clear opportunity to engage members on eastern Long Island as well as finding new members in that region.

Table 2: EVENT FREQUENCIES BY LONG ISLAND COUNTY

County	Frequency	Percent
Nassau	8	38
Suffolk	13	62
Total	21	100

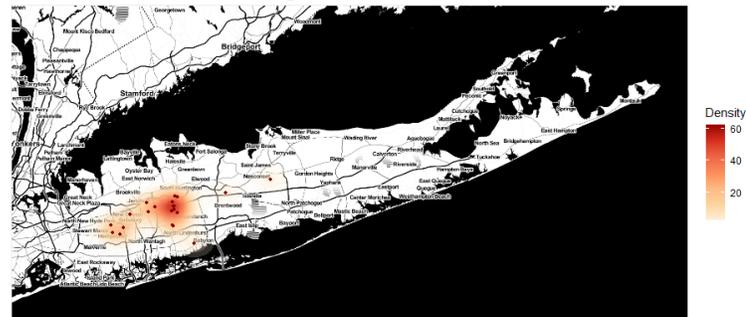
Using an approach outlined by Saltin & McGinty (2019) at the 2019 ATD Chapter Leaders Conference, we analyzed member location data. Larger versions of these diagrams appear in the appendix at the end of this document.

ATD Long Island Member Dispersion



The spatial analyses above, depict members densely packed near the Nassau/Suffolk border, with 48% of members in Nassau County and 51% of members in Suffolk County.

ATD Long Island Event Locations



Event locations demonstrate a similar dispersion. Table 2 shows the split between Nassau and Suffolk counties, with 62% of events being held in Suffolk county. Most events were held on the western side of Suffolk county, Long Island.

**You will be
known by
the company
you keep.**

Understand attraction to “Brands”

Many firms carry with them what is considered by practitioners and academics to be “brand equity.” Brand equity is the incremental value related to a strong brand, due only to the brand’s name and associations (Keller, 1993; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). The focus of branding is often on consumers and their reaction to brands. Considered in an organizational context, the notion of brand equity is highly influential in a variety of human decisions, differentiation, and emotional bonds.

A strong employer brand can have a major impact on our memory and decision-making. Researchers Cable & Turban (2003) demonstrated that individuals remembered more information from the recruitment materials of organizations with strong employer brands. A strong employer brand often simplifies decision making (Rampl et al., 2014). These decision-making advantages translate nicely to the search process. For example, individuals on the job market show more attraction to organizations with stronger brands and will go as far as accepting 7% less in salary to work with these firms (Cable & Turban, 2003). Individuals often differentiate one firm from another using brand. Brand, which researchers consider a *symbolic attribute*, serves as a key point of differentiation, putting strong brands ahead of the pack (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Finally, researchers have identified that choosing organizations with strong brands led to increased brain activation linked to emotion (Rampl et al., 2014; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). While these results focus on organizational attractiveness in terms of hiring, we propose that a similar branding effect may be found with regards to meeting attendance at ATD LI events. In this white paper, we analyze the meeting attendance trends based on branding. The next section details how we collected and coded the data.

Coding the Brands

To determine the brand ratings, ATD Long Island's event listings were accessed as far back as 2011. A valid event was defined as an (1) in-person event, with (2) at least one speaker, and (3) not any event that was classified as purely for networking or social purposes. After determining which events met these criteria the number of registrants at the qualifying events were recorded.

After determining if an event qualified, the speakers were researched to determine the companies they were working for while speaking at the event. The speaker companies were then reviewed to determine if the organization was on the "Best Global Brands - 2019" list, created by Interbrand. If the companies were not on that top 100 list, a search was conducted on LinkedIn to determine total followers for each one. The organizations were categorized as (1) greater than 1,000 followers on LinkedIn, (2) less than 1,000 followers on LinkedIn, (3) less than 500 followers on LinkedIn. Some organizations were not listed on LinkedIn or on the Interbrand list and were coded as indeterminate. If there were multiple speakers, only the highest rated company was used. After looking into all events there were 62 which qualified, with 57 having an established employer brand (not indeterminate).

Events were reviewed to identify content. The events were organized into categories based on the ATD Competency Model (ATD, 2019): Learning Delivery/Coaching Facilitation (32), Instructional Design (23), Career Development (6), and Evaluation (1). Event tags, event descriptions, and the material covered during the event were used to determine the content category for each event.

Results

ATD Long Island has invited many employees of global and regional firms across the island to speak at their events. Not surprisingly, more ATD LI members register for events when the speaker hails from a “Best Global Brands” organization. The three speakers from “Best Global Brands” organizations averaged 29 individuals per session. Despite the small sample size, these speakers averaged over 10 more individuals per session than those from firms with Greater than 1,000, Less than 1,000, and Less than 500 followers on LinkedIn.

Table 2: BOXPLOTS BY RECOGNITION



Table 1 depicts boxplots of the company recognition categories (Intermediate, Less than 500, Less than 1,000, Greater than 1,000, and Best Global Brands, 2019). Boxplots visualize minimums, maximums, lower and upper quartiles, and medians.

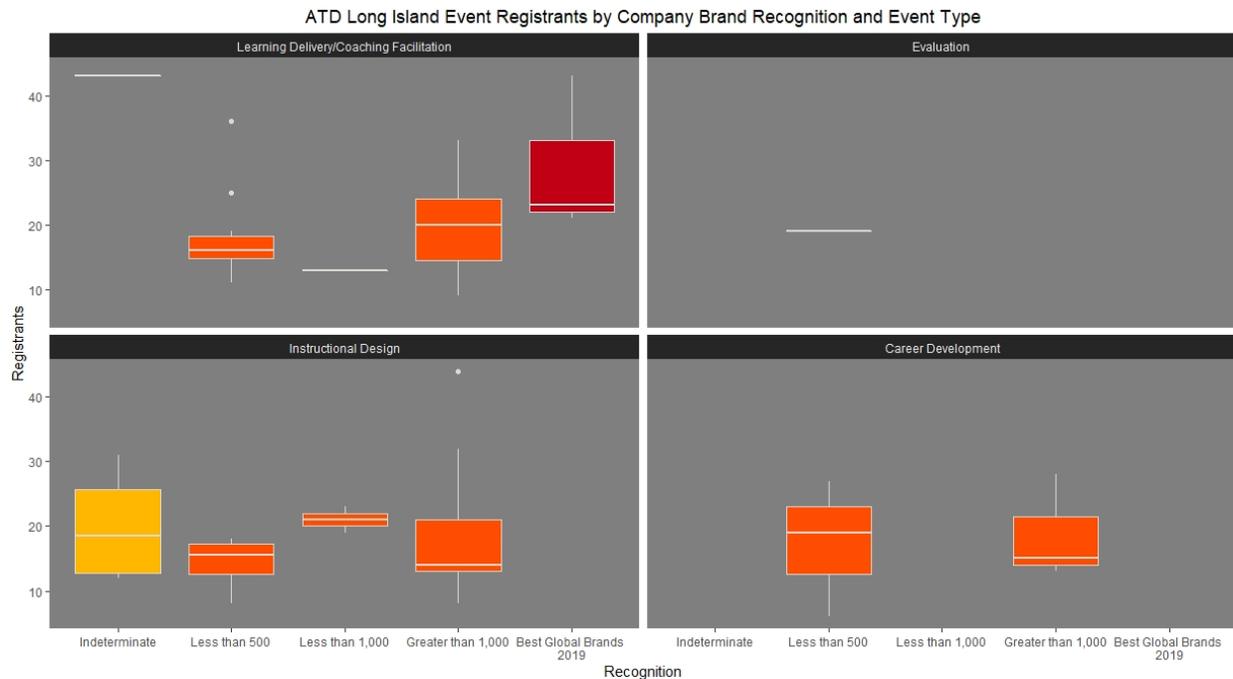
Table 3: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ATD REGISTRANTS

	<i>Registrants</i>				
	Indeterminate	Less than 500	Less than 1,000	Greater than 1,000	Best Global Brands, 2019
Number of Events	5.0	20.0	3.0	32.0	3.0
Mean	24.6	17.2	18.3	18.9	29.0
Median	24.0	16.5	19.0	16.5	23.0
Minimum	12.0	6.0	13.0	8.0	21.0
Maximum	43.0	36.0	23.0	44.0	43.0
25th percentile	13.0	14.0	16.0	13.0	22.0
75th percentile	31.0	19.0	21.0	24.0	33.0

The data shows how strong an effect recognized firms have on ATD LI event attendance. Although there were only three speakers from “Best Global Brands,” they managed to draw over 10 more per session than the three identifiable groups and more than the indeterminate group. Inviting additional speakers from “Best Global Brands” companies may provide an opportunity for increased event registration, event attendance, and networking opportunities. According to Table 2, “Best Global Brands, 2019” averaged 29 attendees, followed Indeterminate at 24.6, Greater than 1,000 at 18.9, Less than 1,000 at 18.3, and, finally, Less than 500 at 17.2.

These findings also highlight the importance of including a greater focus on marketing activities prior to an event. When the speaker comes from a company with lower brand awareness, greater effort must be exerted on marketing and promotion of events. The number of emails used to market ATD LI events has remained consistent (3 announcement emails, and 3 reminders) for most of these meetings. Innovative marketing strategies may move the needle further on attendance for future meetings especially those meetings with speakers from less well-known organizations.

Table 4: BOXPLOTS BY RECOGNITION AND EVENT TYPE



Comparisons across groups were made between brand recognition and event content type to investigate whether event content type and brand recognition together had an impact on event registration. Table 4 depicts this analysis. There was no significant interaction between brand recognition and event content type. There were many event content types that were not fully represented by a brand category. For example, Learning Delivery/Coaching Facilitation was the only event type fully represented by all five coded company brand types. Evaluation events only had an event represented by a company of less than 500 followers. It may be of interest for ATD Long Island to continue with popular Learning Delivery/Coaching Facilitation events while working to expand their Career Development and Evaluation events.

Recommendations for ATD LI		
Location	Speaker	Content
Maintain centralized meeting location for general chapter events	Invite speakers from recognized firms	Diversify speaker knowledge areas
Conduct smaller events with new scheduling options in different localities specific to Nassau and Suffolk county	Increase marketing efforts for speakers from firms that are not as well-known	Increase content in areas not traditionally covered such as evaluation
Identify growing hot spots like Western Suffolk or Eastern Suffolk for events.	Pair speakers from well-known firms with those from less known firms to maintain member engagement.	Events may need to be focused on community building in newer geographical locations

Limitations

While these findings represent many years of ATD events, the authors would like to highlight some limitations with the present study. We caution readers on drawing too broad a conclusion from the study's findings. First, this study represents the findings related to a single chapter located in a unique location with its own unique challenges. Second, this study does not include other potential factors such as time of year, season, etc. that may affect attendance. As an exploratory analysis, these findings may be impacted by many other factors which could offer alternative or concurrent explanations for meeting attendance. Finally, the large number of indeterminate companies reflects the fact that many ATD LI speakers are from niche companies with limited brand visibility. These factors limit the conclusions we draw from this dataset. A larger dataset across many ATD chapters may provide deeper findings.

Research is an iterative process helping readers to draw some conclusions while recognizing that further research must be conducted. Researchers commonly face limitations and the studies presented in this whitepaper are not immune to that reality. We recognize the low sample size of those registered across events. A low sample size reduces our ability to detect a difference between groups, when, in fact, there is some difference. In other words, because our data is limited, we may be underestimating a brand's impact on event attendance. Second, our data lacked equal sample sizes across Brand Recognition categories. For example, Greater than 1,000 had N=32 events whereas "Best Global Brands, 2019" had N=3 events. Third, our data lacked equal sample sizes across event types, making it difficult to compare attendance across types. Some events may have been more popular or scheduled more frequently, however, this lack of data presents a roadblock to investigating group differences. Fourth, we lack data on waitlist and cancelled events. This may speak to the popularity of such events and shed light on any ceiling effects regarding event caps. Including waitlisted registrants and cancelled events with registered participants may help increase statistical power. Finally, the method by which we coded companies leaves room for unique analyses going forward. Companies can be analyzed by their social media following, as well as by industry or their network-closeness with ATD registrants.

Conclusion

Our analyses were aimed at uncovering ATD Long Island member statistics and the impact company branding have on event attendance. We found that there is an even distribution of members across Nassau and Suffolk counties, with an opportunity to engage eastern Suffolk county. The heat map, on page 4, points toward member density around Nassau and western Suffolk counties, a more urban area of Long Island.

Talent professionals across the island may benefit from centrally located events (considering member density) *and* events held across the island, ensuring maximum member engagement.

Moreover, ATD Long Island may better attract members to events through inviting talent development professionals from recognized companies to speak. These professionals can be on panels with others from smaller firms, so that more attendees can benefit from the insights of those hailing from large *and* small firms.

We did not find any meaningful differences between event type and company recognition. However, all categorized companies held what were coded as Learning Development/Coaching Facilitation events. ATD may benefit, too, by diversifying event type, while still holding popular events such as Learning Development/Coaching Facilitation and Instructional Design.

We hope our analysis has informed the Association for Talent Development, Long Island on their member statistics and ATD LI event attendance statistics. We hope that the chapter will continue to track these metrics and look at year over year changes. There are many opportunities to capitalize upon this data regarding member reach and event development to maximize engagement, networking impact, and attendance. We hope ATD LI finds these insights useful in engaging members and developing future events.

About the Authors



James Wolfe is currently leading a team as a Graduate Assistant in the Course and Teacher Ratings department at Hofstra University, while preparing to graduate with his M.A. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology in May 2020. As a Grad Assistant James utilizes project management skills to work on a variety of tasks with confidential data, using SPSS, Excel, and exceptional teamwork to improve accuracy and performance.

James also takes advantage of the excellent opportunities afforded students in his program, such as becoming the first Social Media Coordinator for the MA Program in IO Psychology and the PhD Program in Applied Organizational Psychology, as well as volunteering with the Association for Talent Development: Long Island. Another significant benefit he has from the program is becoming certified in using and interpreting the Hogan Personality Inventory, Hogan Development Survey, and the Motives, Values Preferences Inventory; along with completing the Hogan High Potential web course.

James graduated with a B.S. in Psychology from Alcorn State University and is originally from the Biggest Little City in the World, Reno, Nevada



Thomas DePatie is an industrial-organizational psychology researcher, instructor, consultant, and current PhD student at Hofstra University. His research interests center around recruitment, focusing on applicant decision-making and person-organization fit. As a consultant, Thomas has worked on projects for clients ranging from small cities to the *Fortune 500* regarding job analysis, competency modeling, program evaluation, 360-feedback, and organizational surveys.

He earned his Master of Science in Management from the University of Florida, where he worked as an Organizational Behavior Research Assistant and his Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Florida State University. Thomas is the Vice-President of the PhDs in Applied Organizational Psychology Club at Hofstra



Dr. Sy Islam has over 10 years of experience in a variety of corporate, academic, and applied settings. He completed his Bachelor's in Economics from Rutgers University, his MBA in Human Resource Management and a Master's of Arts in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. He completed his PhD in Applied Organizational Psychology from Hofstra University.

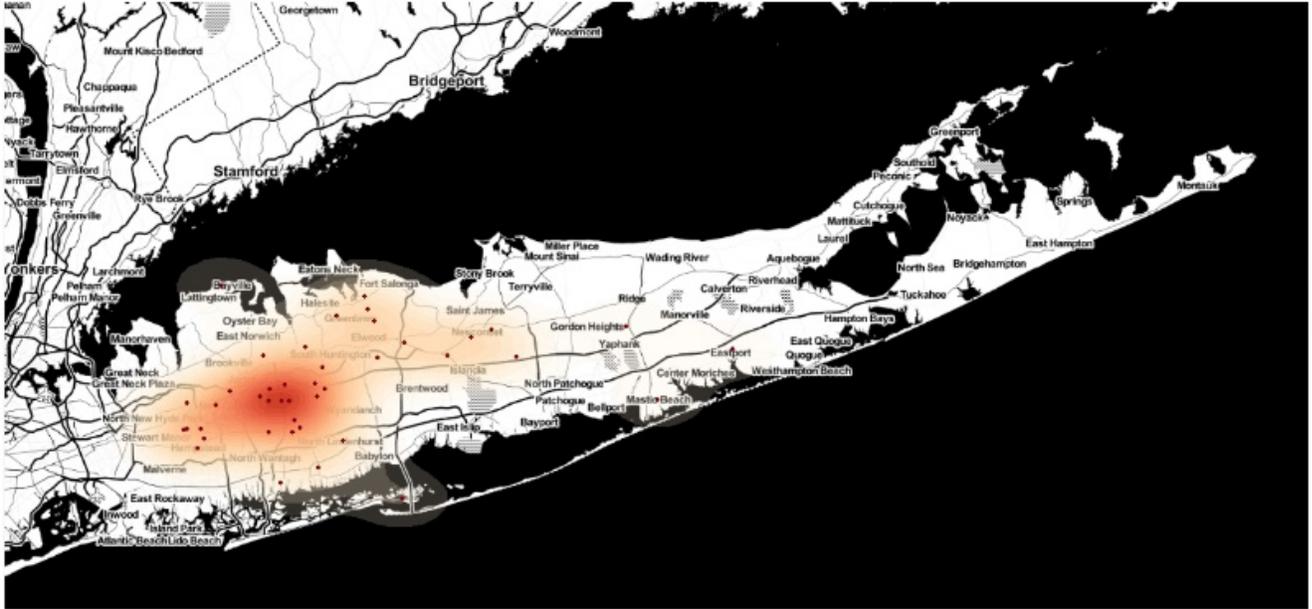
Sy has served in management, consultant and research roles in a variety of organizations. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Industrial Organizational Psychology at Farmingdale State College. In addition to his role as a professor, he is a co-founder and a Vice President of Consulting with Talent Metrics. In his role at Talent Metrics, he collaborates with organizations through consulting engagements in his areas of expertise (training and development, selection, survey design, performance management, and team building). He is a passionate advocate for the fields of I-O Psychology and training. He currently serves as the Vice-President of Programming for the Long Island Chapter of the Association for Talent Development. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the People Science Special Interest Group for ATD NYC Sy has delivered presentations for I-O Shaken and Stirred and Disrupt HR Long Island and won the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology's Scientist-Practitioner Presidential Recognition Award for his focus on science driven practices in training and talent development.

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Appendix

ATD Long Island Member Dispersion



ATD Long Island Event Locations

