an introduction to amBi

your bi social community

With chapters in several cities, amBi is the largest bisexual club in the country (and it’s coming to a city near you). This tutorial is an overview of the process involved in opening a new chapter in your area.

What is amBi?

amBi is a social club for bi people, their partners, and allies. Anyone who is bi friendly is welcome to join, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. Our organizers host a wide variety of fun events, meet ups, and other activities for our members.

amBi began in Los Angeles in 2006. Since then, it has spread to other cities. Each city has its own chapter of amBi, with its own team of local organizers. A city’s chapter is intended to facilitate face-to-face interactions via events and activities.

Check our website at www.amBi.org to see whether or not there is an amBi chapter in your area. If so, it is easy to join at the website. If not, then you may want to consider opening a chapter in your city or greater metropolitan area.

Community:

Community is central to amBi. First and foremost, we are a social club. Members meet one another at parties, at Prides, and for fun activities. People forge lasting friendships in amBi.

Overview:

Page 1  What is amBi?
Community

Page 2  Individuality
What is a Chapter?
A Note on Politics

Page 3  Visibility
Privacy
Starting a chapter
Meetup
Facebook

Page 4  Host Events
Recruit Organizers
Prides
Presentations
“Tent Pole” Parties
Hosting at Home
Reach Out

Page 5  Meet Ups & Activities
How To Get Started
Recipe for Success
Mix it Up
What is an amBi Chapter & Why should I consider starting one?

An amBi chapter is simply a local branch of our social club. Local chapters are meant to make it fun and easy for members in your area to meet up with one another.

Interacting online with members in other parts of the world can be fulfilling, but the real magic of amBi is meeting face to face with other members of your local chapter.

Check to see whether or not there is an official chapter in your area. If there isn’t one yet, you may want to consider starting one.

Starting a chapter is a bigger commitment than simply joining one, however there are many benefits to doing so. A chapter allows you to post events to our calendar, to reach out to the general public in your community, and you’ll gain access to our organizer resources. amBi’s staff will be here to help you to organize Prides, presentations, “Tent Pole” parties, meet ups, and other activities for you and your members.

If you’re interested in opening a chapter, simply fill out our New Chapter form at www.amBi.org. But first, finish reading this overview.

A Note on Politics:

While activism is not the primary focus of amBi, some chapters do choose to participate in charities or other causes, such as food drives, youth shelters, scholarship fundraisers, etc. As a nonprofit, amBi can support causes but not political parties or candidates. If amBi members engage in political activism, they should not do so as official representatives of amBi.
Visibility:
Members who feel comfortable doing so can help us reach out to the greater community in their area through public parties, prides, and presentations.
We encourage chapter organizers to be visible, to inform the general public, and to make it clear that amBi is a welcoming organization to join.
The primary focus of amBi is building a supportive community of members, and this is facilitated by members who are comfortable being a public face.

Privacy:
We understand that not everyone is out to everyone. It’s important to respect our members’ privacy.
As an organizer, you’ll help to create a safe space for your members. amBi gives people an opportunity to socialize in a warm, supportive environment with a diverse group of people who accept bisexuals for who they are. Some members are more comfortable attending private activities, and that’s ok.

OK,
I want to start a chapter
What exactly will this entail?

As the founding organizer of your local amBi branch, you will be responsible for getting your chapter off the ground. Our staff will provide you with resources and assistance to help you to do all of this and more.

Meetup:
After your application to open a chapter has been approved, the next step will be to start a group at Meetup.com to facilitate your chapter’s online needs.

Meetup enables you to find new members and build your local bi community. It is also an excellent tool for scheduling events and activities in your area.

Facebook:
As an organizer, you’ll need an account at Facebook.com. You will be added to our secret FB group for amBi members. This group is a great way for

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members to interact with one another online (even with members from other cities). As members join your chapter, you’ll want to add them to the Facebook group so they can be a part of the broader community.

Host Events:

Fun activities and events are the backbone of an amBi chapter. The biggest responsibility of organizers is to host and coordinate events. Meetups attract new members and keep existing members involved in the community.

Recruit Other Organizers:

As the lead organizer of your chapter, it will be up to you and your team of organizers to coordinate and host these activities and events in your area. Your success as a group will hinge on your ability to fill the calendar with quality activities.

A meetup can be something as simple as meeting friends for coffee or taking a hike. The more organizers you have in your chapter, the fewer activities you will need to host personally.

Prides:

Most major cities have LGBT Pride Parades. If your city has one, organizing an amBi contingent in your local Pride Parade / Festival can be a terrific way to interact with your community, attract new members, and build camaraderie between your existing members. This can be a challenging but rewarding endeavor. Once your chapter gets the hang of it, you’ll be excited about doing it again year after year.

After you have committed to opening a chapter, you’ll have access to the amBi’s experienced staff who will enthusiastically help you organize an amBi contingent at your local Pride Parade.

Presentations:

One great way to reach out to the public is by organizing a presentation. Universities are a good place to present a seminar on bisexuality. Invite your organizers and most active members to tell their stories (the ones who are comfortable being out in the public eye). Be sure to conclude your presentation by telling the audience about amBi and inviting them to join your group. We have resources available to help put together and plan effective presentations.

“Tent Pole” Parties:

Regular parties can be another excellent way to reach out to the public, attract new members, and make your existing members feel like they are part of something big.

We usually suggest that chapters organize at least one annual public party. We call these events “Tent Poles,” because such regular affairs help to grow the group and hold the chapter together.

Reach out

It’s important to reach out to the public with your group. Prides, public parties, and presentations can help you do this. Involve your organizers and your most active members (the ones who are comfortable being out in the public eye). And remember, have fun!

You can promote the party with flyers, with posters, in the local newspaper, on Meetup, Facebook, and by encouraging your members to tell their friends. You can sell tickets to the public and offer your members a discount. As always, amBi’s experienced staff is here to assist you in this process.

Hosting at Home

Some members enjoy hosting at home, this is also a great opportunity for members who are less comfortable in public to participate in amBi. Hosting at home can be a potluck, a movie night, a book club, an intimate tea party, or a massive (continued)
Halloween bash. The beauty of being an amBi organizer is that you have the freedom to organize the events that are right for you and your community.

**Meetups & Activities**

Meetups are the bread and butter of your chapter. A meetup can be anything: meeting for coffee, trying out a fun new restaurant, crashing a local bar, going for a hike, a picnic, swimming, camping, bowling, skydiving, a road trip to the zoo, attending a sporting event. You name it!

Ask your active members and organizers what sorts of things they would like to do with the group. Then encourage your organizers to post those activities on your calendar. It’s important to have a variety of meetups on your calendar every month. A good rule of thumb is to try to have at least one meetup a week.

As your chapter’s founding organizer, it will be up to you to recruit enthusiastic organizers and inspire them to host fun events and activities. A community isn’t a community unless they meet up with one another, so this is absolutely essential.

**How do I get started?**

If you decide to start a chapter, simply fill out our “Application to Open a New amBi Chapter” at amBi.org. In so doing, you’ll be applying to be the founding organizer of your local amBi chapter. As the founder of your chapter, you’ll be responsible for getting your group off the ground, recruiting organizers, growing your membership, organizing Prides and “Tent Pole” events, and encouraging your organizers to host regular fun activities for the community. amBi’s staff is here to assist you. Follow our “Recipe for Success,” and remember – have fun!

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**Recipe for Success:**

- Create your Meetup
- Participate in the Facebook Group
- Recruit enthusiastic organizers
- Give presentations
- Organize amBi Pride contingents
- Host public “Tent Pole” parties
- Host private parties
- Encourage your organizers to host a variety of meetups

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**When it comes to meet ups, variety is the key ingredient. Don’t get stuck in a rut. Keep mixing it up. And have fun!**