

'52' Ideas To Help Retain Members

A Kaleidoscope of Membership Ideas



1. Send a thank you note for joining or volunteering could even be an e-mail message.
2. Include networking tips in newsletter or new member pack. Networking is a primary reason for joining and one of the most important benefits to offer. Produce a short article or checklist on how to use these networking opportunities more effectively. Add to a meeting or convention brochure. Also could fax the list to pre-registered attendees shortly before conference.
3. Use testimonials from some members who aren't active but still feel membership is valuable. If members feel we understand and are trying to help them cope with challenges they are more likely to renew. Ask those who are not active but continue to renew to contact other inactive members.
4. Use Jeopardy marketing putting it in the form of a question. "Wouldn't it be great if someone were working everyday to tell the public about....?" Or "Wouldn't it be nice if every month someone brought to your door another form of continuing education and a place to find out about job openings?"
5. Conduct focus groups by phone. Members with varying years of experience focusing on the needs of a small segment. New member focus group. Send all participants an agenda and set of rules. Take attendance; let everyone know who is attending. Make a list of who speaks so you know who to ask for input.
6. Give an incentive, such as a free gift, to members who renew by a certain date.
7. Have a renewal lottery - renew more quickly to get in (more often).
8. Communicate successes to members regularly.
9. Generate segmented and targeted renewal notices. Tell each segment how membership benefited them this year.
10. Send a special certificate of thanks to first-time renewals. The first two years produce the most drops. Focus hard on the first renewal.
11. Identify and recognize members with the most tenure. Sends a message that people stay a long-time.
12. Identify at least four specific contacts to make with first year members that are above and beyond the normal. Phone, fax or special newsletter.
13. Develop a written retention plan. Incl. Retention goals (retention rate, retention rates by category, % of drops that were first year members, activities to be undertaken, resources available to help, etc.

14. Do an e-mail survey of important questions and issues as they arise.
15. Establish an involvement committee. Purpose to get members to participate in some way.
16. Involve the board in retention efforts. The health and growth of the organization is already among the board's responsibilities. Divide the membership among the board and devise a retention system that awards points to board members for each member of their "team" during the year. I.e. 1 point if they attend a meeting, 25 points if they renew, etc., etc. Get commitment from the top volunteer leaders to not only talk about the importance of member participation and retention but also do something about it.
17. Establish a member-mentoring plan. Assign new members to current members.
18. Color code correspondence so members can quickly identify types of information. Such as one for educational info., one for legislative, etc.)
19. Institute a "thank you" column in publication to recognize members for involvement and leadership.
20. Send a member profile form to new members to gain information.
21. Have a special edition of your publication focus on how your organization is helping members prepare for the next century.
22. Be sure your Web page has hot links to individual members for business referrals and networking purposes.
23. Keep experienced members active through targeted involvement. Need to keep older members and new ones interested and involved. Keep the activities meaningful.
24. Produce materials that clearly show what the company/employer gains by joining and participating in your organization.
25. For members recruited during a membership drive, add at least one extra contact during their first year of membership.
26. During functions, suggest that officers look for new members and spend time with them. Make sure new members' nametags indicate their status.
27. Scan industry, professional, and community publications, as well as the Internet, for ads by members. Try to get them to use the association logo or some sign of affiliation.
28. Give members points when they participate in any activity. Like frequent flyer points/tickets to a ball game. i.e.: Volunteer at several events (new member orientation, registration etc.)
29. Send an audiocassette or floppy to members as an informal annual report.
30. Establish a Member Service Center for "one stop shopping." A central place where they can receive all information and products/services they need.
31. Establish standards for responding to members.
32. When conducting focus groups at meetings, invite attendees who are not leaders to participate.
33. Send mini-surveys that can be done quickly (via fax).
34. When a new member joins, e-mail congratulations from an organizational leader that same day.
35. Post results of meetings and conferences on the Internet.
36. Increase meeting attendance by featuring an interview with the meeting's keynote speaker in the publication that comes out a month before the meeting.
37. List new members on your Web site.
38. Put individual e-mail addresses of key leaders on your Web site.
39. Combine and coordinate all forms of member communication to support membership recruitment and retention efforts.

40. Have a special list serve and/or special section of the Web site for first year members.
41. There are only two forms of currency that we can use to pay our members: Recognition and Tradition!! Look for any opportunity to recognize any member's contribution. Create a Tradition in your chapter and recognize those that uphold that tradition.
42. Assign a hostess for each new member for a few meetings, so that he/she has someone to sit with. Orientation meetings for prospective members and the new membership that has already joined are very important. In these meetings all the responsibilities and obligations of membership should be covered. It is only after complete explanation of the workings of your association that the new member will decide if this is what he/she wants to join. After realizing what he/her responsibility will be, you can be fairly sure that he/she will make a good working member when she does join.
43. Have new members serve as greeters during a meeting so they can get to know all the members.
44. Keep the FUN in fundraisers, community service activities and meetings to get members interested and involved. You can still accomplish your goals while keeping the process lively and fun.
45. Remember that the best time to retain members is BEFORE they show signs of dissatisfaction. Make sure members know you care about them. If they start missing meetings or are becoming less involved in activities, give them a call to find out why before it becomes a chronic situation.
46. Encourage input from your members regarding your association's community activities. Ask new members for their ideas — they may have some fresh, exciting thoughts, and asking for their input will show that you are interested in their opinions.
47. Involve new members in association activities immediately. Have them participate in an event as soon as they show an interest in your chapter. Ask them to co-chair a committee or coordinate a small activity in the early stages of their membership.
48. Ask those that have benefited from your associations services to speak to your chapter.
49. Periodically ask long-term members what their interests are, as these will develop and change over time. Assign responsibilities based on their interests, and give them increasing responsibilities to challenge them and keep them motivated.
50. Inspire and motivate members at the beginning of each association/board year by holding a "meet the officers" session, giving members a forum to ask new officers questions about their goals and direction for the association during the upcoming year. Seek members' input to help solidify goals.
51. Don't let activities and fundraisers become stale. Make sure that your association's activities are still relevant for your community and your members. Periodically try something new.
52. If it does not happen inside some of the projects above; we should make sure there is effort to keep addresses up to date (mail, email and fax and phone)

**THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION –
The Association Of NAHU IS All Its Members. YOU!**