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Finders Keepers

Tips for Being Great at Recruitment & Retention

One of the main reasons people join a professional or trade association is for resources and insights that help them further their careers. Yet, many associations say that attracting and retaining younger members is becoming more difficult. To recruit (and keep) these vital constituents, consider different levels of membership and offer limited-time dues discounts in materials you mail to prospects. What about customizing an informative newsletter with articles targeted to specific audiences – younger prospects just starting out, managers on the way up, executives at the top? Include links to your website with more content just for them.

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The more interaction you can create, the better! Ongoing engagement is critical to a growing membership, and it starts with the onboarding process. According to a 2012 membership marketing survey, associations with renewal rates at or above 80% are significantly more likely to greet new members with a mailed welcome kit,

phone call from a volunteer or staff member, and/or an in-person new-member reception or orientation.¹

Experts also say that members are more likely to renew when they attend conventions and join a special interest group or local chapter. To generate maximum attendance at meetings, publicize your conferences frequently and enthusiastically. Capitalize on the staying power of printed materials. Statistics show that 70% of associations offer their meeting materials both in print and online, while just 20% make materials available online only.²

And here's an interesting fact you'll want to remember: Most people fail to renew simply because they forget to, says Tony Rossell of Marketing General Incorporated. That's why smart marketers keep the renewal reminders flowing. Rossell's firm reports that surveyed associations spent 62% more on their renewal efforts in 2012. (Expenditures had decreased in 2010-2011.)³ Almost two-thirds of the respondents (63%) reached out 4-9 times during their renewal campaigns.⁴ Once again, frequency is key!

1. 2012 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report - Marketing General Inc.; 2. Ibid; 3. 2012 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report - Marketing General Inc.; 4. Ibid

Sparking Interest!

Charge Up Your Media Mix

Some years back, marketing guru Philip Kotler studied associations and came to a thought-provoking realization: “I learned that most associations are using only 10 percent of their marketing potential to improve their performance.”¹

That’s unfortunate, because Kotler says marketing needs to be viewed as an active force in defining an association’s strategy. A great way to accomplish this goal? Leverage the power of multiple media channels.

*Multimedia Marketing 2013*² talks about charging up traditional marketing (direct mail, catalogs, newspaper and magazine ads, TV) by integrating new forms of media. Jeff Rohrs, VP of marketing research and education at ExactTarget, believes there’s a great opportunity for brands to extend the reach of their traditional media investments by linking to the digital world of push marketing, where, he says, “Each consumer is his or her own form of media.”

Taking advantage of this development is something many colleges are doing quite well, and associations can learn from their examples. Like them, you want to provide information on social media for prospective members who trawl the outlets for insights and opinions. But also make sure you’re sending the same messages through direct mail, trade ads and packages of printed materials that convey your association’s mission, brand and member benefits.



Says Hallie Sammartino, VP of marketing and communications at St. John’s University, “I’m one who thinks print will never die. We do a lot of direct mail: view books, postcards, save-the-dates. We’ve streamlined print, but we’ll never completely get rid of it.” Her goal for both direct mail and email is to increase engagement on the website. “Eighty percent of college decision making happens on the website,” she says. “If you get them engaged there and can get them to visit the campus, that’s the deal maker or breaker.”

Do your homework. Identify the needs of your members and prospects, then make sure that your website reflects their interests. Learn what you need to do to increase conversions – then apply that lesson in every medium. The results can be electrifying.

¹ Associations Now, *Market Thinking* by Karla Taylor December 2005

² Direct Marketing News, *Multichannel Marketing 2013 Essential Guide* dmnews.com July 2013

Personal Touches

How To Succeed in Capturing Attention

In the 2013 Association Marketing Trendswatch report on research conducted by the American Society of Association Executives, personalization and/or micro targeting is listed as one of the big three current trends cited by among association management. A whopping 78% rank personalization high in importance – which is why variable data printing has many organizations rethinking how they send out and target their marketing communications.

Variable data printing allows associations to easily tailor the message to an individual member or prospect, and focus on specific information relating to the recipient. In addition, details and images that are particularly meaningful to the individual can be included on a per-piece basis, making a direct connection with the recipient's key interests.



The results that can be generated by this type of customization are staggering – whether you're making a first-time contact or reaching out to members during renewal campaigns. **Mailing someone a BRC card that's already printed with vital information such as name and address has been shown to increase response times by a remarkable 5 to 7 days, and improve response rates by 36%. When marketers extend the personalization even more – beyond the expected mailing address and salutation – response rates jump from 1.5–2% to a range of 11–43%!**

Variable data print, publication production, and membership drives are just a few of the many ways that Modern Litho is helping associations improve marketing effectiveness and achieve more success.

Please explore our website and find more information on marketing for associations at www.modernlitho.com/associations or call us at 1-800-456-5867 to learn how we can serve you.



6009 Stertz Road | Jefferson City, MO 65101
Phone: 800.456.5867 | Local: 573.635.6119