

The Association Blog: News and Resources for Association Executives

Recruitment and Retention: 5 Best Practices for Member Retention

Posted by [Webbright Staff](#) on Sep 23, 2013 2:16:00 PM

Tweet

Share

0

Like 0

Share

G+1

0

Member organizations can be frustrating. If you speak to leaders of these organizations, this will be a part of the discussion in a short amount of time. These organizations are based on members who often are unavailable to volunteer but hold the organization to a very high standard. This can lead to an inability to move goals forward because members will get involved but ultimately blame the organization for a lack of success. The end result is membership loss. Fortunately, membership recruitment and retention strategies are symbiotic.



Define Values Based on Member Needs..and Wants

It is common for members and leaders to have differing ideas of what is best. Members of a professional organization may focus on ideas such as respect, pay, social concerns, and continuing education. Leaders may focus on a bigger picture such as long-term viability of the profession, political positioning, and workforce retooling. Members will rally behind the big picture, but only if they see equal time spent on their goals

Organizations fail when they take the approach of “doing what is best” for the member even if the members do not agree. Organizations easily focus on the very big picture and miss the smaller steps that are critically important to members. While the approach may seem beneficial in the long term, member engagement will wane as members see a parenting approach.

To develop a complete value-based approach and increase recruitment and retention, organizations should develop goals around the big picture while also including goals membership has shared as wants. Approach all goals with the same enthusiasm. As the members see wins for their wants, they will focus on their long-term needs.

Engage Members

Membership engagement is a common problem for most member-based organizations. Members have little free time or desire to engage unless they feel the return will be significant. You need to find ways to engage your members. One way to achieve this is to develop accountability for those who voice concern. If a member shares a concern, tap them to work on the solution. If a member voices concern over continuing education, enlist them to chair a committee to focus on continuing education.

Be Personal

Everyone likes when a boss or coworker takes a personal interest in them. Members are no exception. It is very common for leaders to position themselves in meetings in such a way that they appear unapproachable. Leaders may sit on a platform, voice their goals, and then at breaks retreat to be near each other. Leaders need to branch out and communicate with members. Some organizations ask leaders to spread out in the meeting room, sit with groups at lunches, or form groups during breaks with people they have never spoken too. This may be awkward for the leaders in the beginning, but the impact can be life changing for members who may have never had a chance to interact face to face with the leaders of their organization.

Reach out to Lapsing Members

It is essential to view membership as a recruitment and retention strategy. Recruitment is not the only mission of a strong membership campaign. Recruitment fails if members decide to lapse after the first year. It is harder to gain a new member than recover a lapsed one in most cases. Members lapse for a variety of reasons. Many will voice a concern over membership fees or that they feel the goals of the organization do not reflect their goals. This is often a knee-jerk answer that is not a true reflection of the reason they chose not to renew. Organizations often fail to accept that members will not simply join or renew just because the leaders feel their goals are right. Reaching out to members, especially a lapsed member, can be the difference between salvaging a member or losing one.

A good membership committee plan includes retention policies. Who will call your lapsed members when they fail to renew? How will you track their reasons? What will be your reply to commonly given reasons or will the committee just nod their head and make a checkmark next to a box? Knowing what to say to a member and when to relay issue up the line are critical.

Be Adaptable

Change can be difficult, but it is inevitable. The organization of twenty years ago will likely not succeed today unless it has continued to adapt its mission. Organizations need to be

willing to accept that their mission may need to be altered in order to remain relevant to members. The best ideals fail without strong member support and a membership organization without members is powerless. A regular strategy meeting with leaders and members where everything is on the table can ensure that the organization does not become fixed and immovable and allows effective recruitment and retention.



Topics: [member outreach](#), [member engagement](#), [member recruitment](#), [member retention](#)

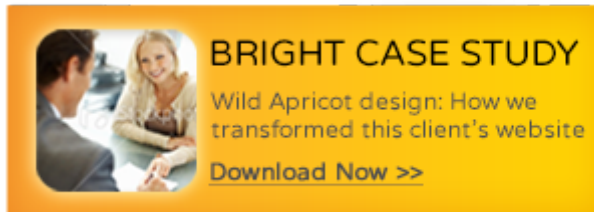
Get new blog posts instantly

Email*

Subscribe

Free Bright Resrouces





Follow Webbright

The Bright Association Press is an interview series, hosted by Lamees Abourahma, Webbright founder and president, featuring association executives covering topics related to membership management, recruiting, retention, marketing, IT, and other related topics. We're talking real-life professional associations' challenges and unique solutions.

The Association Debrief is a weekly news roundup for busy association executives covering topics related to association management, Board engagement, member recruitment and retention, leadership and marketing. Every week we will have a theme that is based on the major trends of that week and compile articles from credible sources in a news highlight style.





Membership & Wild Apricot Articles

- [How to Rock Your Organization's Website](#)
- [Financial Tips for Building Association Revenue](#)
- [How Associations Can Benefit From Analytics](#)
- [How to Make Volunteering Work for You](#)
- [How to Get the Member Feedback You Need](#)
- [What to Look for in a Membership Website Building Software](#)
- [Making Sense of Member Analytics for Associations](#)
- [How Associations Can Build a Great Board of Directors](#)
- [How Organizations Can Win at Social Media](#)
- [How to Use Social Media to Connect with Your Members](#)

Browse by Tag

- [administration \(1\)](#)
- [alternative association revenue \(6\)](#)
- [amanda kaiser \(10\)](#)
- [association administration \(3\)](#)
- [association boards \(7\)](#)
- [association branding \(3\)](#)

- [association conferences \(2\)](#)
- [association debrief \(36\)](#)
- [association events \(10\)](#)
- [association industry \(7\)](#)
- [association leadership \(9\)](#)
- [association management \(17\)](#)
- [association marketing \(34\)](#)
- [Association Meetings \(3\)](#)
- [association partnerships \(2\)](#)
- [association political activity \(1\)](#)
- [Association success \(4\)](#)
- [blogging \(5\)](#)
- [board member engagement \(4\)](#)
- [board member recruitment \(2\)](#)
- [bright association press \(8\)](#)
- [bright clients \(3\)](#)
- [Bright News \(1\)](#)
- [Bright Reviews \(1\)](#)
- [budget \(1\)](#)
- [business networking \(1\)](#)
- [challenges for professional associations \(6\)](#)
- [communication strategies \(5\)](#)
- [content marketing \(15\)](#)
- [donor management \(2\)](#)
- [email marketing \(1\)](#)
- [engaging association board members \(7\)](#)
- [engaging association leaders \(4\)](#)
- [funding \(6\)](#)
- [fundraising \(3\)](#)
- [inbound marketing \(7\)](#)

- [increasing event participation \(5\)](#)
- [internet marketing \(12\)](#)
- [lamees abourahma \(1\)](#)
- [leadership \(3\)](#)
- [lovable marketing \(5\)](#)
- [managing association events \(10\)](#)
- [managing volunteers \(5\)](#)
- [marketing \(7\)](#)
- [marketing analytics \(2\)](#)
- [marketing for associations \(23\)](#)
- [marketing software \(1\)](#)
- [member communication \(30\)](#)
- [member education \(3\)](#)
- [member engagement \(53\)](#)
- [member experience \(16\)](#)
- [member friendly website \(9\)](#)
- [member outreach \(19\)](#)
- [member recruitment \(27\)](#)
- [member retention \(28\)](#)
- [member value \(14\)](#)
- [membership and marketing solution \(7\)](#)
- [membership management \(16\)](#)
- [membership management software \(1\)](#)
- [membership marketing \(20\)](#)
- [membership solutions \(16\)](#)
- [membership technology \(2\)](#)
- [membership website best practices \(12\)](#)
- [membership websites \(19\)](#)
- [Multigenerational Members \(6\)](#)
- [NextGen Members \(4\)](#)

- [non-dues revenue \(2\)](#)
 - [non-dues revenue \(5\)](#)
 - [nonprofit website design \(4\)](#)
 - [political outreach \(1\)](#)
 - [public relations \(2\)](#)
 - [recruiting young members \(7\)](#)
 - [search engine optimization \(2\)](#)
 - [seo \(1\)](#)
 - [Shira Harrington \(2\)](#)
 - [social media \(10\)](#)
 - [sponsormanagement \(7\)](#)
 - [sponsorship \(6\)](#)
 - [twitter \(1\)](#)
 - [virtual organizations \(1\)](#)
 - [volunteer organizations \(3\)](#)
 - [web design for small businesses \(2\)](#)
 - [website design for non profits \(4\)](#)
 - [Website Value \(5\)](#)
 - [wild apricot \(16\)](#)
 - [wild apricot integration \(5\)](#)
 - [wild apricot partner \(9\)](#)
 - [wild apricot reviews \(2\)](#)
 - [wild apricot solution for associations and nonprofi \(2\)](#)
 - [wild apricot tutorial \(4\)](#)
 - [wild apricot website development \(2\)](#)
-



[HOME](#)

[SERVICES](#)

[PRICING](#)

[BRIGHT CLIENTS](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[BLOG](#)

[CAREERS](#)

© 2016 Webbright Services, LLC