

## **10 Tips to Increase Membership**

Every club should have a good mix of membership strategies for retention and to increase growth. The start of a new year is a good time to evaluate your membership plan.

### **1. Exude a warm and welcoming attitude**

A warm and welcoming executive can translate into a warm and welcoming club. Your executive needs to take a pro-active approach in meeting and greeting potentially new members. The president, in fact, should stand at the door, and shake the hand of members and guests as they come in for your monthly meeting. It can be hard for people to walk into a roomful of people they don't know. Introduce yourself, take an interest in them, and introduce them to other members.

### **2. Make everything you do a "media event"**

Now that digital cameras are so easy to use, take a picture at all your events - your keynote speaker at the monthly meeting, your new member inductions, when you meet with your politician - and send it to your local newspapers. Newspapers, especially weeklies, are always looking for items of local interest.

### **3. Want to get the media more interested in what you're doing?**

Invite a local journalist to speak at your meeting. When the club invited the assistant managing editor of the local newspaper, she not only spoke about her life in the media but also gave us tips for ways to get better media coverage. She also took the business cards of everyone there, and wrote profiles of several business-owning members.

### **4. Get to know your members**

Make sure your executive, including the Membership Secretary and her committee, makes a special effort to get to know each member by name. This can be a challenge, as your group grows, but it is essential. A member needs to feel that he or she is a valued part of the club, regardless of how much service or volunteers hours are contributed.

### **5. Set up a club website**

People increasingly expect an organization to have a website. Online search has become the most common and easiest way to research an organization for more information. You want to ensure that you are not missing out on valuable exposure online. Setting up a club website is also a valuable resource to your members, who need to find timely club information quickly and easily. A web based system such as ClubRunner makes it easy for your club to have a professional website in addition to communication tools, and is very affordable for non profits.

## **6. Get new members involved on committees and special projects**

Ensure that members are aware of what your committees are, and encourage them to get involved. A wide variety of skills and talents are needed to run a successful club, and everyone's contribution is needed. Use your club website to feature all the committees and what they do.

## **7. Have a membership contest!**

Any member who brings in a new member during the year has their name put into a hat. The drawing is held in April, and the winner gets their membership dues for the coming year reduced by half! There can be various takes on this - maybe the member who brings in the most members during the year gets a free membership the following year. The key issue is that your membership grows as a result of a collaborative effort.

## **8. Send postcards to local businesses**

Use postcards as a promotional tool. If you see an article in your local newspaper about a new business or about a person who has a special appointment or achievement, send them a postcard with congratulations and invite them to come to a meeting. Better yet, invite them to join the club. Many people might believe your club is exclusive and would find it a great honor.

## **9. Challenge every member to bring a friend to at least one meeting per month**

Ask one guest to provide a short comment toward the end of the meeting about what they thought about the meeting. This will give you a good indication whether they are a potential member. Sometimes they'll convince themselves to join right in the middle of their comments! Just make sure to tell the guest at the beginning of the meeting that these comments will be requested at the end so the guest is not caught off-guard.

## **10. Make use of other organizations in your community to "spread the word" about your club**

Service clubs, networking organizations, and professional associations are always looking for speakers. Most municipal councils are open to presentations by local non-profit organizations. Economic development organizations often organize conferences and one-day seminars where you might have an opportunity to speak to others about your organization.