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S.O.S. - A Series of Supports

Membership Recruitment & Retention

As 2011 draws near and we come to a time of reflection over the holiday season, I thought it would be timely to plant some ideas around member engagement that you may wish to explore over the next few months. All not-for-profits are tasked with the challenge of recruiting and retaining memberships, and some of the following ideas are creative ways to explore this common ground:

Invite members to “beat the dues hike.” Setting increases for membership dues down the road can provide you with a window to encourage early renewals before the price hike. Offer special deals for those who renew before the dues increase, and be considerate of those who currently hold memberships by offering multi-year renewal options.

Involve members in recruitment. When you invite newcomers to your organization, encourage them to reach out to peers and co-workers who may be interested in joining as well. Offer rewards for bringing in the most new members.

Give discounts. Offer coupons for prospects to attend events at low or no cost, and a lower dues structure initially for new recruits.

Celebrate senior members. Tap into their wisdom by asking them to serve in a mentorship group, speak on panels of experienced professionals at a program, facilitate a workshop, judge awards competitions or scholarships and more!

Create a sense of community with in-person groups, e-groups, casual gatherings, etc... No matter the association, members rate networking as one of the

most important benefits of organizational meetings.

Offer “teasers” of what’s to come. As you approach the end of someone’s membership, share a taste of what will be offered as new and exciting members-only benefits in the upcoming year.

Don’t give up on lapsed members. Just because a renewal date has come and gone doesn’t mean you should give up. Conduct a special phonathon effort to this group offering a “limited time” perk for renewing now.

Form a member services committee to generate ideas, expand new member growth and keep member retention high. Survey former members for feedback, and contribute to a “Membership Matters!” brand!

Explore new types of member benefits. Meet with staff and key members to analyze the benefits you currently offer and create a list of additional options that may be cost effective and attractive to new/existing members. Some benefits worth exploring include: free/discounted event admittance, coupons and discounts on purchases of supplies, gifts, services and other items, members-only social gatherings, interest groups or educational opportunities, special types of recognition, access to restricted website pages and online benefits, special publications, consideration for special awards and of course-Voting privileges!

Taken from “109 Ways to Retain Volunteers and Members”
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