

**BLS SCHOLARS & FELLOWS RETENTION TASK FORCE**  
**January 17, 2024 @ 1-2 p.m.**  
**Renaissance Orlando Seaworld – Room TBA**

**Agenda**

- I. Welcome and introductions
- II. Approval of September 1, 2023, minutes
- III. Review Mission, Goals, Achievements to date
  - a. Mission:
    - i. To review and study why the Section is not getting fellows/students to continue attendance after their fellowship year and after law school. (Source: Minutes from EC meeting Sept. 2017)
    - ii. To address the challenges faced in retaining Fellows and Scholars. (Source: Minutes from EC meeting June 2018)
  - b. Goals:
    - i. The Task Force is studying and evaluating metrics to identify why many of the Scholars and Fellows have chosen not to remain active in the Section and then to seek out ways to address those concerns. (Source: Minutes from EC meeting Sept. 2018).
    - ii. Revisit reasons for attrition.
    - iii. Develop a "playbook" for combating attrition: Handbook of best practices
  - c. Achievements
    - i. Studied retention best practices materials
    - ii. Created survey tools
    - iii. Completed surveys of Scholars and Fellows with high response rates
    - iv. Created Style Guide
    - v. Created draft Handbook outline
    - vi. Created draft sections of the Outline
- IV. Handbook assignments, revised benchmark dates
  - a. Section assignments (see attached)
  - b. Section drafters needing assistance
  - c. New deadline for draft submissions to editor?
  - d. Deadline for editor's pre-final submission to full task force
  - e. Deadline for presentation to Executive Council
- V. Other business, general recs for Membership, IMF, or EC?
- VI. Adjourn.

Attachments: 9-1-23 minutes, articles on retention best practices.

**BLS SCHOLARS & FELLOWS RETENTION TASK FORCE**  
**September 1, 2023**  
**Minutes**

- I. June 21, 2023, minutes approved.
- II. Achievements to date
  - i. Studied retention best practices materials
  - ii. Created survey tools
  - iii. Completed surveys of Scholars and Fellows with high response rates
  - iv. Created Style Guide
  - v. Created draft Handbook Outline

III. Handbook assignments

The task force continues on task (pun intended) to produce a best-practices plan that will be the content of a handbook. Past and present scholars and fellows weighed in via surveys to tell us what we can do better. Members of the task force have volunteered to draft various sections of the handbook (see attached). We will have a draft for the task force to review at the January mid-year meeting. From there we will refine it, with the goal of having a completed handbook by the June meeting.

- IV. Edit process: Katherine Van de Bogart has volunteered to be the Handbook editor. We thank her for creating our Style Guide to be used by the drafters for style consistency.

## S/F RETENTION BEST PRACTICES HANDBOOK. OUTLINE

### o Mission Statement and Purpose

- What is the purpose of the Fellows and Scholar Programs, and what is the goal of having them involved.
- Overlap and distinctions between the two programs, including oversight functions (Membership v. IMF).

### o Selection of Participants and Publicity of Programs [Omit as unrelated to retention?]

- Criteria for Selection of Scholars and/or Fellows
- Points of Contact from other Schools
- Timing of Application Pool
- Information Session

### o Onboarding/Orientation

- Welcoming Materials
  - Chair form letter/video
- Welcoming/Orientation Program
  - CLE/Program
    - Contents: BLS mission, initiatives, structure, committees, task forces, website, benefits, communications
  - In-person reception
  - Expectations of Scholars
    - Participation during select meetings/conferences
    - Participation in Substantive Committees
    - Admin. support for CLE
    - Future involvement in Section
    - [Placeholder for anything specific to Scholars]

- Expectations of Fellows
  - Participation during meetings/conferences
  - Participation in Substantive Committees
  - Admin. support for CLE
  - CLE attendance opportunities
  - Future involvement in Section
  - [Placeholder for anything specific to Fellows]
- Appointment of Mentor(s)
- Leadership Training

o Mentorship

- Best Practices for Mentors
- Role of Mentor
  - Include distinction between mentoring Fellows v. Scholars, if any
  - [Placeholder for role of Social Mentors, if any]
  - [Placeholder for role of Substantive Mentors, if any]
- Responsibilities of Mentor
- Mentor Training

o Programming [Don't know what programming means]

- Best Practices for in-person programming
- Regular programming and committee participation
- Substantive Committee Involvement
  - What Substantive Committees do
  - Ways to become involved in Substantive Committees
  - Task Force Participation
- Standing Committee Involvement
  - Difference between Standing Committee and Substantive Committee
  - Ways to become involved in Standing Committees

MarsolCruz  
April  
Mortmerville

Ian  
Adam

- Best Practices and expectations of committee and Scholars/Fellows.

o Financial support

- Budget by category (S v. F)
- Appropriate uses of stipend
- How to apply for reimbursement
- Use it or lose it policy

o Recognition

- Name tags
- Social media/print media/website kudos
- "Graduation" ceremony at annual BLS luncheon
- Opportunities for discounted/new membership

o Exit Interview

- Interview tool topics
- Reporting to Membership/IMF

o Re-solicitation

- Identify non-renewals (Section administrator)
- Chair invitation (sample form letter)
- Outreach by former mentors

o Appendix

- Form letter templates
- Compliance tracking report

Adam  
Ian  
Joey

Tabitha  
Taylor +  
Tom

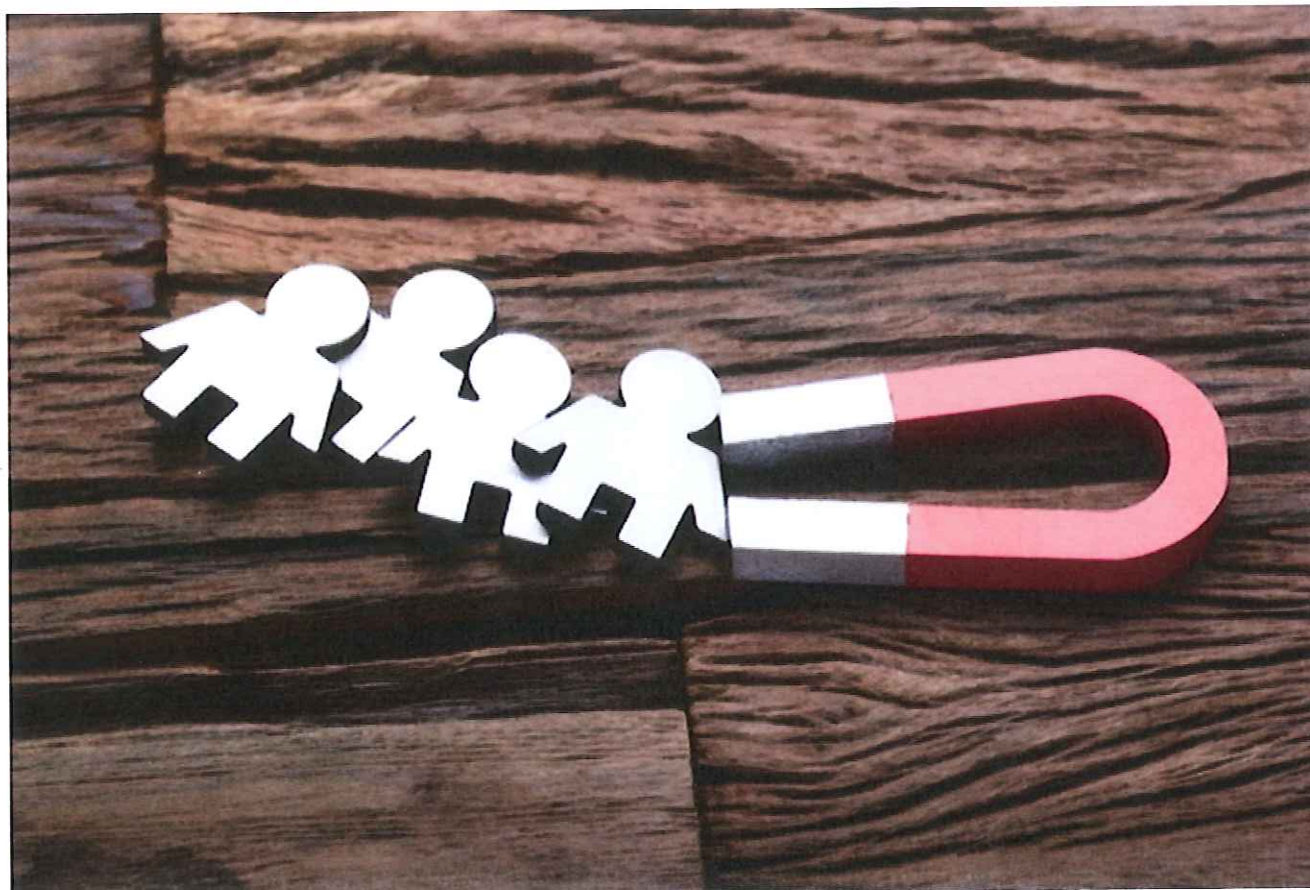
Crystal  
Potts 09

Judge  
LaRosa

who should  
do it?



# 5 Methods to Retain Your One-and-Done Members



Let us guess: member turnover on your mind?

No matter the season, every association professional worries over the loss of a hard earned member.

Harder still is catching those members who come into your association for one sole reason and then slip away without even a goodbye.

If you're looking to catch these folks before they leave, check out these five methods you should try to retain those one-and-done members of your association.

## 1. Remind Your Members of the Benefits

If a member joined your association for one purpose only, it's your goal to remind them of the numerous other benefits they get as a perk of their membership (*think incentives!*). One of the

best ways of clearly advertising these benefits is to post and promote in any of the following locations:

- Your website
- Your e-newsletter
- Your social media pages
- Your member landing page
- Your invoice renewal

## **2. Catch Lack of Engagement Early**

Don't wait until your members are already halfway out the door before you start trying to re-engage with them. So, when's the best time? Think onboarding! Reaching them early will help them (and you) identify all of their additional interests in your association and keep them hooked for longer.

We recommend gathering this information by providing a new member survey to gauge what their expectations are compared to what your association can provide. This data will allow you to hopefully find the intel you need to recommend other programs that would be a better fit for their regular schedule.

## **3. Open Two-Way Communication**

Everyone wants to feel like they can (and should) provide feedback, as it's one way we can feel validated that we are being heard by those around us. Similarly, you want this sentiment to be felt by your members when it comes to new initiatives being acted out by your association.

You'll have a better chance of retaining these one-and-done members if they feel comfortable coming to your team for help and/or criticism as opposed to being shut down. So make it clear on your contact page that you're open to hearing any feedback – good and bad! Otherwise, you'll only give them more reason to turn to the door.

## **4. Use Your Membership Committee**

Think about it: you have a whole task force for the very purpose of engaging with your members, so it's a great place to start focusing on these outlier members! See if you can get your membership committee to start giving members quarterly or semi-annual calls to just check-in.

You could even provide a standard check-in questionnaire to ask points like:

- What was the last event you attended?
- What has been your favorite part of being a member?
- Do you have any constructive feedback for leadership to change?

- Do you have any interest in joining a committee?

## **5. Public Recognition from Your Association**

Member or not, people like to feel appreciated for their hard work! If your one-and-done member joined for a stand alone event, you need to make sure that you recognize them in a public format so they can associate that praise with the work they did for your association.

We recommend one of these formats for quick and easy recognition:

- Facebook / Instagram / Twitter / LinkedIn
- Your Annual Meeting (Slideshow / Brochure / New Member Stand Up)
- Your Newsletter



# 21 Quick Tips for Improving Member Retention



Member retention is critical to the long-term success of your membership website.

It costs 7-10 times more on average to win a new member than it does to hold on to an existing one; and if you're losing more members than you bring in then your business won't last long!

In this article, we're giving you 21 quick tips for improvements you can make to your membership strategy in order to improve your member retention.

## **1) Make improvements to your member onboarding process**

Getting members off the right start increases the chances they'll get results and stick around for longer.

## **2) Add “quick win” content to your membership site**

Help people to get a positive result – however small – and you'll build goodwill with those members.

## **3) Provide members with a “roadmap” that helps them navigate and consume your content**

Some people need to have their hands held a little more in order to avoid overwhelm, so a roadmap can help keep them on track.

## **4) Provide a member “diagnostic” to help people find where to start on your site**

Not knowing where to start can cause frustration that will lead people to leaving.

## **5) Conduct a survey of existing members to find out what they want, how they're interacting with your site and so on**

It's easy to make assumptions about what our members want.

Regularly survey them to ensure you're meeting their needs.

## **6) Provide the ability for members to pause their membership**

Sometimes short-term circumstances mean someone needs to take a break from your site.

Giving them the option to pause can often be better for your retention than their only option being to cancel.

## **7) Provide the ability for members to switch their current payment plan**



Similarly if you have multiple membership tiers or payment structures, then allowing people to upgrade or downgrade on their own terms gives them more options if they're considering cancelling.

### **8) Provide a “downsell” to a slimmed-down version of your membership offering**

If someone is thinking of leaving because they can't afford your membership, then having a “downsell” option where they can move to a cheaper version of your membership that doesn't have as many features/as much content but is more cost effective could save that active member.

### **9) Create a content calendar, and share it with your members so that they know what's coming up**

Letting people see what's on the horizon helps to demonstrate the ongoing value that you're providing as well as create “fear of missing out” by showing what they'll miss if they leave...

### **10) Provide software, templates or tools to your members that they would miss if they left**

Similarly if your membership includes tools, services or software that a member would need continuous access to; the prospect of losing that access will be a powerful motivator to keep members sticking around.

**IT COSTS 7-10 TIMES MORE ON AVERAGE TO WIN A NEW MEMBER THAN IT DOES TO HOLD ON TO AN EXISTING ONE; AND IF YOU'RE LOSING MORE MEMBERS THAN YOU BRING IN THEN YOUR BUSINESS WON'T LAST LONG!**

### **11) Add a “Share your successes” section or thread within your community**

Members love acknowledgement and being made to feel special and recognized; so having somewhere to celebrate those “wins” can go a long way.

### **12) Add a “Progress Log” or “Member Accountability” section or thread within your community**

Providing a means of keeping members accountable can improve the chances of them getting positive results, which in turn can prolong their membership.

The act of documenting that progress helps people to see the worth of being part of your membership, which aids retention.

### **13) Provide an “upsell” to a “next level” product**

Sometimes your members will want more than you're offering, in terms of access, support and facilitation.

Offering a premium version of your membership as an upsell is a great way of catering to those members and avoiding them leaving because they're not getting what they really want.

### **14) Add drip-fed or series-based content to your site**

Releasing content over time – often called “[drip-feeding](#)” – is a simple way of keeping people subscribed and improving member retention as they'll want to consume the full series.

### **15) Ask members for testimonials**

Not only are testimonials great for marketing, but asking for them encourages people to reflect on the positives of your membership – and others seeing such testimonies will be encouraged by the prospect of similar outcomes for themselves.

### **16) Simplify your membership pricing**



If you've over-complicated your [membership pricing](#) structure then there's a greater chance people will leave because they weren't expecting certain charges or didn't fully understand what they were signing up for.

### **17) Teach members about time-management, specifically in regards to the use of their site**

If you can teach them how to find the time and how to prioritize using your membership there's a greater chance they'll use it and get results rather than simply slipping away

### **18) Break your content down into bite-size, easily manageable parts**

Overwhelm can often lead to members “checking out” and never really getting started with your content, so try making it easier to consume if you want to improve member retention.

### **19) Vary the scheduled times for your live training or any other live elements of your membership offering**

Your membership is a potentially global business – account for people in a variety of timezones when scheduling live events such as Q&A's and live member webinars.

This will improve attendance, which increases the value people are receiving, which in turn improves the likelihood they'll stick around.

### **20) Implement automated follow-ups for failed payments or expiring credit cards**

Some membership plugins such as [MemberPress](#) have this option built into them.

Take advantage of it.

### **21) Create an “exit survey” for members who do cancel**

Find out the reasons why people leave in order to identify any opportunities to fix problems and make improvements.

# 10 Effective Membership Retention Strategies & Ideas

May 29, 2019

So, you've just gone through the intensive work of getting a new member onto your list. After hours upon hours of constant meetings, they finally signed with your organization. All the hard work is over finally, right? Not even close. To sign a member is one thing but could you imagine if you went through all of this time and money for this individual to not renew their agreement with your organization the following year? Membership retention is key, and it is certainly one of the greatest challenges for most membership-based organizations.

Although there's an initial attraction when getting a new customer, membership retention is better not only when it comes to the amount of time, but also the money spent when trying to get a new contact. But don't worry; we've done the hard work for you. Here's a list of 10 membership retention strategies and ideas that'll keep your members coming back.

## Focus in on Your Target Audience

Membership retention begins at the forefront of your organization. If your organization aims to just attract anyone that will give you money, you're more likely to have a much higher churn rate. The reason for this is because your membership could not possibly be completely universal, some people will love the membership, and others will not. This is inevitable.

But, to cut down on those who do not fully enjoy the membership, companies need to avoid the common mistake of targeting a market that is too wide. Without knowing the specifics of who you are trying to attract, it can make it really hard to retain all of your customers.

This leads to members joining with the wrong expectations and is a common trend when it comes to the decline of membership retention.



Instead, focus this excess time and money on those who are already long-term advocates for your organization. They are the ones that clearly identify with your core service model and continue to resonate with your organization.

When you focus on a specific group, your business model becomes clearer, with the ability to resonate with these specific people rather than wasting the time and money on individuals who are not looking to become long term advocates for your organization.

## **Focus on Long Term Incentives to Boost Membership Retention**

So, you've reeled in your new potential customer with a short-term incentive plan that benefits only the new potential member. It is possible that you have not yet taken into account whether or not they are a part of your selected targeted audience and if they will actually be long-term users of your organization.

Although short-term incentives may boost membership quickly when the renewal of a full-priced membership comes around it can be extremely difficult to retain these members after paying your rate at a discounted price. Often at this time, you would yet again see a trend in higher churn rates, of customers who simply do not see the value in the organization at this full price point.

Because of this, it is key to keep rewards for new members limited. Not only will these new members not get used to the temporary benefits of a new user, but existing customers may also find a disparity between their loyalty to the organization and the benefits that the new bees are receiving for simply signing up.

Instead, continue to reward and incentivize your already dedicated and present user base. Not only will this increase membership retention but it will reduce the number of individuals that simply signed up for the discounted price, and not for the product/service itself.



# Focus on Onboarding

Now, the customer has just signed with your association. Time to start developing a solid relationship with this new member through the continuation of a beginning onboarding process. The first year of membership with an individual is crucial when it comes to membership retention rates. It is the first impression they have of your organization and just like a dinner at a nice restaurant, it could decide if they choose to come back or not.

Through new member onboarding, you can assist this process of guiding the way for members to immediately see the value in the organization, with the intent to keep coming back.

By having a new member onboarding plan your organization will be able to assess the member's interests, needs, and goals. You can personalize and educate new members about the different ways to get value from the membership through things such as in-person/online educational programs, website resources, newsletters, networking events, etc.

By beginning this channel of clear feedback at the very beginning, you are also able to strengthen your relationship with the new members so they do not lose sight of the value your organization provides.

Welcome your new members and physically show them that the organization appreciates their business. This welcome can either be in the form of a physical welcome gift, or even a simple template email sent to everyone as soon as they click "submit" on their application.

Our article on [7 Steps to Crafting Your Ideal Membership Welcome Package](#) will have you welcoming your new members like a pro, and lists many unique options to make your new members feel the most valued.

## Don't Suffocate New Members

We've all been there... scrolling and deleting hundreds of emails from a variety of different companies that seem to email you every single day. It seems like a never-ending cycle of receiving and deleting spam emails to the point where you don't even read the title or sender address anymore. Yet you can't seem to muster up the energy to simply unsubscribe yourself from the

email chain.

Although good intentions, companies tend to lose their leverage when they choose to suffocate new members with the constant flow of information through email. Because of that, after the initial onboarding process is finished, companies should look at a more hands-off approach for these individuals over the next three to six months. There is no point in “overdoing” contact with new members if they simply are not going to look through the information you are sending them.

Instead, take them out of the loop with “heavy” email chains every day. Opt for a handoff approach, sending the occasional email just to check in. At the three-month mark, continue to email them a list of educational opportunities and new benefits that have recently come up.

This will keep your emails from getting overlooked and instead, members are still being kept up to date with new educational activities and benefits, without the association of pesky mass emails with your organization. At the six-month mark, the new members have a decent grasp on what the organization is about. Because of this, reach out with information that highlights upcoming both local and national association events.

## Customize Communication Channels

As stated at the beginning of this article, there is no such thing as a “one size fits all” membership for individuals. Members enjoy when interactions are customizable and are able to fit their daily needs in a way that is most beneficial to them as a whole. Creating ways to customize this channel of communication between you and your client is key, not only from a membership retention strategy standpoint but also, for a better outlook of your organization.

Personalized subject lines in emails are more likely to be opened and must be used for the member to acknowledge their personal value to the organization. We all know we get the daily spam mass email that is sent to an organization’s entire email list. This reduces the likelihood of that person opening the message because people assume that it was just sent to everyone, with no acknowledgment of the person's individuality.



# Survey Existing Customers

It can be easy to assume looking from the outside of what exactly your members want, and how their ideals fit within your own idea of a perfect membership. These assumptions of what the member's want can lead to a gap in communication and therefore the business may not know what the members are actually in need of.

To mend this communication barrier and boost membership retention, send out a survey to existing customers to find their own personal preferences and how well they are interacting with your association. With the use of these surveys, businesses get an insider view of what current members want to make sure they are getting their needs met. Not only do they get their needs met, but it also gives customers the reassurance that their membership with the organization is being valued and is actively choosing to reach out to get their own opinion on how things are going.

It is also important to survey new members 6 to 9 months into the first year of their membership. This survey is to see if the new members are able to see the value in their own membership with the organization. Taking suggestions from these surveys will not only keep your clients happy, but it will also increase membership retention rates significantly by receiving your information directly from the source.

Although surveys sent out to current members are important, it is also critical to get the opinion of those who choose to opt out of their membership. To do this, perform "exit interviews" if the member is open to it, and see why exactly they decided to leave. Companies use exit interviews to gauge aspects such as the work culture, daily concerns, processes, issues with management, ethics, and employee morale.

Exit interviews are a way to gain information that otherwise would not have been possible if they were still in the membership. If you focus on the reasons why people are not choosing to renew with your business, you will hopefully be able to hone in on these aspects and eventually fix the problem of lower membership retention. Again, it is all about making the member feel important and valued.

# **Develop your Business Engagement Scoring**

Engagement scoring is simple; think of it as a report card for each of your members. A business must first determine the appropriate "grading" scale for specific actions a member may take, this information all factors into that individual's final grade in order to help a business categorize its members.

Majority of businesses have three categories; very engaged, moderately engaged, and not engaged. The main goal would be to move the "not engaged" members up to the "very engaged" level in order to also hopefully boost membership retention.

After breaking up your members, reach out to those who are less engaged with ways they can get involved with your program. Whether this be educational videos, conference calls, surveys, make the recipient feel welcome in your community.

## **Stress the Benefits of their Membership**

At the end of the day, the benefits of the membership are most likely the main reason they decided to partner with your association. By promoting recent offerings and stressing the fact that your organization is the only one able to provide these benefits, members are able to remember exactly why they joined in the first place. Not only does this help with simply knowing what is available to them, but it also keeps them engaged in the organization with a way that is specifically designed for its members.

Unfortunately, perfect retention rates do not exist in any organization, especially for new members. You will always face members who simply do not respond to your membership retention strategies. However, by giving your members the opportunity to see the value in their membership, you have done the most you can do to retain their presence.



After implementing these 8 membership retention strategies into your own business, you will be able to take your association to the next level within the business world. Expending so much time and money in order to generate enough lead to convert individuals into members, is only profitable if you are able to retain these members. Use these strategies to your advantage and focus on providing the best service possible to your members in order to increase first-year membership retention and expand your overall association.

## Run Attractive Events

Running events are a great way to engage members as it's a great time to put them in situations they wouldn't normally be in had you not run an events. That sounds a bit obvious, but what we mean is, sometimes people need to be push or pulled into situations that force them to get engaged. It's not unlike members to get bored or lazy when it comes to communicating, engaging or otherwise begin a part of an organization, and an event with a juicy topic or setting can usually be just the thing to invigorate them again.

Events are also a great way to attract new members and get some networking going, and networking is going to be the reason a lot of members join organizations in the first place. You aren't pandering to their need to network either. You're helping the community by being the one point of reference for all future business, projects, and campaigns to come together and discuss pertinent issues. Regular events like this are a sure fire way to keep members renewing so they can continue attending your now exclusive events for opportunities.

## Offer Perks & Benefits

Perks and Benefits, like incentives, are partnerships or deals that you make with outside parties that give perks or benefits to your members. Sometimes these require profit sharing, and if you're lucky, some good will arrangements as well. If you're like to reward, award, or otherwise give perks to certain levels of membership.

Maybe it's a discount at Starbucks, or access to certain facilities at club rooms. These perks provided are great ways to retain members, as they may find these perks a great cost-benefit to themselves to stay as a member, and

since like your partnership didn't cost you anything, it's no skin off your back to provide it as well.

Giving away perks willy-nilly is nice and all, but it's a little dangerous to just let them loose all at once. You can combine these perks with your membership incentives that we discussed in the beginning of this article. By setting membership goals in a member's lifecycle at your organization, you can prepare perks and discounts as an award for reaching certain milestones. 1 year membership completed? Get a \$100 Amazon gift card. New member? Enjoy 15% off every coffee at your local coffee joint. Refer a new member? Get your next renewal 50% off.

Talk to your local or digital peers, you might find yourself in a fruitful predicament that can only help to benefit everyone.

# 15 effective membership retention ideas to keep your members

If you run a membership organization, there's nothing quite like the rush of acquiring new members; after all, what's the point in having a fantastic organization you've put your heart and soul into if there's no one signing up to reap the benefits?

However, the allure of acquisition often overshadows the more important task of keeping the attention of loyal members who make it through the door. This is partly because membership retention is hard, and not an immediately attractive prospect. With research suggesting that [most businesses need to retain customers for at least 12 to 18 months to break even on their investment](#), it's easy to see why some organizations neglect it in favor of new acquisitions.

However, any organization focusing on acquisition over retention is building itself upon shaky foundations, and that's why we've compiled a list of 15 membership retention ideas to help you build a stronger, more successful organisation that won't come crashing down when the initial hype subsides.

## Why is Membership Retention important?

- **It's more cost-effective than acquisition** - according to [Bain & Company](#), even a 5% increase in membership retention can trigger an increase in profits of between 25 and 95%, which makes sense when you consider the recurring revenue a repeat customer will bring. When compared to the effort it takes to attract a customer who may only pay once, it really is a no-brainer
- **It's more likely to lead to referral income** - [more data](#) from Bain & Company showed that a customer who made one purchase from an online retailer was likely



to refer three people, but one who made 10 purchases generally increased their referral rate to seven people. This supports the idea that if you tend to the members you have, they can do a lot of the work for you

- **Membership retention improves your reputation** - repeat subscriptions is a sign of happy members. An individual can easily be swayed into making a single purchase through the use of promotions or discounted services, but may easily disappear when it's time to pay again. Loyal members regularly handing over their hard-earned cash is a sign that you are a trustworthy organisation worth their time and investment.

## How do you increase membership retention?

While membership retention can seem difficult, it doesn't have to be. Many of the most effective strategies involve tools and insights that you already have at your disposal, and it's just a matter of refocusing your efforts on what's happening inside your organization instead of worrying about the members you haven't reached yet.

Our user retention strategies are broken down by category, to help you better understand how they relate to your members, as well as how they can build upon the great work you're already doing. Specifically, these methods can be separated into clarity-focused, product-focused, and customer-focused initiatives.

## 15 Membership Retention ideas and strategies

### *Clarity-Focused strategies*

#### **1. Refine your onboarding process for new members**

While no one likes to be patronised, a bit of hand-holding is sometimes necessary to help people get to grips with your organization. This is especially important if your organization competes directly with others for members.



If you are seeing a drop in membership at renewal time, it's always worth going back to square one and asking a few important questions: have I been clear on what my offering is? Do new members know how to get involved once they've subscribed? Is there anything missing from my subscriber emails? Often, something as simple as [updating your membership website](#) or improving your emails to new subscribers will help confused members to understand your offering and stick with it.

## **2. Set their expectations**

A concise content and event calendar is a vital part of any onboarding process. If you set clear expectations from the moment they hit "subscribe", letting them know what's coming over the next few weeks and months, then new members will feel more supported and secure in their decision.

Adding a personal touch (such as a bespoke message or greeting) to onboarding emails and communications can often help too.

## **3. Sell the benefits!**

Once you've drawn a person in, don't allow any time for buyer's remorse! You have exactly what they're looking for, and don't let them forget it. You wouldn't be running a membership organization if you weren't proud of and confident in your offering, so pass on that passion to your members.

Don't be shy about regularly reiterating member benefits in the emails you send to your membership. In particular, emphasize how your offering addresses their needs and pain-points and, ultimately, makes their life better.

#### **4. Don't overwhelm new members**

While clarity is important to user retention, it really is a balancing act. If taken too far, a once-useful roadmap for members to follow can quickly become a steep decline into pushy correspondence and straight-to-spam emails that dilute the benefits of your service.

So, while everything outlined above has the potential to cultivate a dedicated subscriber-base, make sure you guide as much as is necessary, and then give your members room to breathe. If you have a solid onboarding process, the rest will likely fall into place.

#### *Product-focused strategies*

#### **5. Make your membership offering unique**

Although membership organizations typically occupy a very specific niche, they almost always have some competition. This may be from a larger organization with a broader focus or a range of more niche outfits. Either way, one of the best ways to retain members is to truly distinguish yourself from any comparable services and competitors. While you may not want to refer to your competitors by name, consider articulating your benefits in a way that subtly makes it clear how you stack up against the competition.

What are you offering that can't be accessed elsewhere?

#### **6. Learn from others**

While in general it's better to focus on your members than your competitors, if you're blind to competitors you run the risk of missing the boat on new opportunities and innovations that may facilitate your competitors taking a portion of your members.

However, if you keep your eyes peeled and identify what your competitors are doing well, you might be able to expand upon their ideas to offer something that far surpasses them. It's never a bad thing to remind your audience why you're the top contender for their attention.

Similarly, spend time looking at what similar membership organizations in other sectors are doing. Often non-competing organizations are happy to share their learning.

## **7. Everyone loves a cliffhanger**

Knowing your audience is important, and presenting yourself as an authority in your field opens up great avenues for repeat subscribers. If there's a particular kind of content you know people are tuning in for, don't give it all away at once.

Serialized content, like weekly blogs, webinars or explainer videos, is a fantastic way of reeling in a regular audience. Humans are creatures of habit, so if you can bag yourself a spot within their schedules, you're on the right track to maintaining your audience.

## **8. Flexibility is key**



The belief that "one size fits all" doesn't apply when it comes to pleasing members. In fact, such a rigid viewpoint can be harmful in that it doesn't recognize your members as individuals.

If you don't offer flexibility in your pricing and services, you'll alienate those that either don't want to pay for parts of your service they don't use, or are willing to pay more for your service in exchange for a few extra features.

Both upselling and down-selling are useful tools that give dissatisfied individuals another option if they are considering cancelling their subscription. Simplifying your subscription plans to allow users to up or down-grade at any time is an easy way to cater to changing needs.

Specific examples are basic plans that include only email updates and premium plans that include access to VIP events.

## **9. It's ok to press pause**

Part of recognizing your members as individuals is also understanding that their habits and circumstances won't continue indefinitely. Any recurring payment is a commitment, and sometimes people cancel simply because they can't afford that commitment at that point in time.

By allowing people to pause their subscriptions, you open up the possibility that they may be able to make that commitment again at a later date, when their circumstances change. A door that remains ajar is more welcoming than one that is

firmly closed, and members will also feel valued that you have recognized the benefit they bring with every transaction.

### **10. Strike while the iron is hot**

A great tactic for retaining members is to try and sway them at key moments of indecision. Have they left something in their basket but not completed their purchase? Why not send them an offer code as a little incentive? Has a credit card been declined? Send them a friendly reminder to update their details, alongside a summary of the benefits they will lose out on if their membership lapses. Data like this is invaluable, so be sure to capitalize on these opportunities as they appear.

### **11. Dangle the carrot on social media**

There's nothing wrong with a little friendly persuasion. Just as offer codes and discounts can incentivize new members to sign up, they can be just as good at keeping people excited by your product. You could even explore giveaways or [social media promotions](#) to get people re-engaged with your organization in a way that is fun and instantly shareable.

Giving someone a saving in the short term is always preferable to losing them as a member forever, so don't be afraid of some good-natured bribery.

### **12. Try the personal touch**

Sometimes, it's the little glimmers of humanity that make your organization stand out. Consider a direct personal email to members you think are in danger of

cancelling and offer a conversation. It is much easier to cancel a subscription with a faceless organization than it is to cancel with a person.

Even a small amount of personal contact can change a member's perception of your organization. Always be on the lookout for these opportunities, and tailor your content to maximize them.

### *Customer-Focused strategies*

## **13. Survey your environment**

No one knows your offering better than you; except for your members of course! Even with the best of intentions, it can be easy to lose perspective on exactly how people interact with your organization day-to-day.

By surveying your active members, you are tapping into the most valuable resource of all. You can find out first hand what your audience likes about your offering, as well as what they find frustrating or difficult. If you find out that 70% of your audience want more updates from your organization, or that 25% find the checkout process fiddly, you can approach solving these issues with improved clarity.

This also applies to dissatisfied members. Creating an exit survey to discover why someone has cancelled their membership is the easiest way to avoid cancellations for similar reasons in future.

### **Examples of Exit Survey questions for organizations**



Exit Surveys are an extremely valuable tool, and putting one together doesn't have to be complicated. Effective Exit Surveys are detailed enough to give you actionable info, but concise enough that the customer completes them without getting bored.

The exact questions will vary depending on the type of organization, but here are some general questions to get you going.

*"What made you decide to cancel your subscription?"*

*"If there was one thing you'd change about our offering, what would it be?"*

*"What could we do to make you consider subscribing again in future?"*

*"What were we doing right?"*

## **14. Testify!**

Another way to utilize your existing members is to let them sell the organization for you. Positive testimonials are easy enough to source, and these individual perspectives will help build trust in your brand and your service.

Testimonials are just as powerful for retaining existing members as they are for attracting new members. This is because they paint a picture of what membership could be like so that disengaged members are inspired.

Keep them short and to the point, though; no one wants to read a testimonial reminiscent of an Oscars acceptance speech. A good testimonial only needs to

highlight specifically how your membership offering benefitted the member in question, so that other users can envisage similar benefits.

## **15. Acknowledge your members**

The importance of this one cannot be overstated. In the end, all organizations are nothing without their members, and a big part of membership retention is acknowledging this. Just telling you members that you appreciate them is a great first step. Beyond that, loyalty schemes and special offers are perfect for recognizing the continued contributions of long-time supporters, and making your members a part of your success will work wonders in keeping them invested for weeks, months and years to come.

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This list is by no means exhaustive and is merely meant to illustrate the potential goldmine of repeat subscriptions you already have, ready and waiting. New user acquisition should of course remain a valid priority in order for any organization to grow, but hopefully these 15 membership retention ideas will set you off on the right track towards building a sustainable and successful organization.

If you found this article useful, be sure to check out White Fuse's other fantastic content, designed to support you in all areas of organization creation, growth and retention.