50 Ways To Boost Association Membership
It’s no secret that acquiring and retaining members is at the top of the priority list for any association.

From acquisition of new members through continued engagement of long-time members, we at Aptify love helping associations with the entire member journey.
Acquiring New Members

We know how difficult it can be to come up with new ideas for acquiring new members, so we’ve put together this list of 50 ways to boost association membership. We hope they inspire you to get creative and to take your membership to the next level!

1. **Provide current members with a referral bonus or award.**

   Leveraging your current members’ networks is one of the best ways to find prospective new members. Offering current members some kind of incentive, even if it’s small, can get them out there preaching from on high for you without you having to spend any additional time or resources.

2. **Recognize current members for their recruitment efforts.**

   If you have members that are active in bringing in new members to your association, celebrate them! Whether it’s in your newsletter or on your website, this will show your members that you appreciate their recruitment efforts.
Get social!
Find out where your ideal members are hanging out on social media, and be active there. You don’t need to be on every social network, just where your members are.

Utilize ads on social media.
Building on #3, leverage paid advertising on social media to get your association in front of the people who are qualified, but might not know about you.

Find co-marketing opportunities.
Partner with other businesses and organizations in your industry by marketing each other’s services or offerings. It’s mutually beneficial, and these opportunities have the potential to exponentially expand your reach to possible new members!

Start (or maintain) a blog with helpful industry information, tips, and insights for potential new members.
Answering common questions in your industry and providing useful, educational information is a great way to build trust with prospective members before they actually sign-up. (It’s also a great way to keep current members engaged - but we’ll get to that later!)

Optimize your website for new member conversions.
When a potential new member lands on your website, make sure there’s a clear and compelling path for them to become a member. You never want confusion or difficult navigation to deter someone from joining your association.
Put on events that aren’t just for members.

Members-only events are great as membership benefits, but there is also great value in putting on events that non-members can attend. This allows you to show the value of your association to potential new members before they join.

Add a job board to your website.

A job board is a simple and easy way to add even more value to your members. Adding one that non-members can have limited access to can help drive traffic to your website and get you seen by more people in your industry.

Use existing business networks (Chambers of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, Rotary Club, etc.).

If your association and/or your members are involved in local business networks, these are great ways to get the word out about your association and its benefits. Take advantage of speaking opportunities or sponsorship opportunities whenever possible!
Improving Your Member Sign-Up Process

While the sign-up and member onboarding process may seem like a minor aspect of the membership journey, poor execution of it can lead to decreased retention and engagement in the future. Here are some simple tips for improving the sign-up process so that your new members feel excited and eager to join rather than confused and disappointed.

**Simplify your sign-up process.**

Making the process of joining your association simple and easy makes a great first impression for new members. If new members have to walk through a hundred steps and jump through hoops to join your association, that becomes the precedent for their member experience. You may lose new members before they even finish the sign-up process.
Provide a sign-up incentive.

Whether it’s a discount on the yearly membership fee, a free gift (like a some branded merchandise from your association) or a free training, sign-up incentives are a great way to delight your new members.

Use email nurturing campaigns.

If you know who has visited your association’s sign-up page but hasn’t actually signed up, create an email nurturing campaign to address common questions that potential new members might have, or offer sign-up incentives to grab their attention.

Send a great welcome email to new members.

Put yourself in a new member’s shoes - what information about your association would be beneficial to know? Keep it simple - just the important stuff.

Create a welcome email series that explains your association and its benefits.

Instead of including every possible bit of information in your new member welcome email, create multiple emails that your new members will receive incrementally after they sign-up. These emails could include info about your association, explanations of benefits, helpful tips or recent blogs - anything that adds value to new members!

Celebrate new members in your email newsletter.

Celebrate your new members for joining, as it’s a great way to welcome them into your community.
Use personalization as much as possible.

Whether it’s in emails or on your website, personalization is a great way for new members to feel connected to the community, which will set them up for greater engagement in the future.

Help new members acclimate with tools or how-to videos.

Again, put yourself in a new member’s shoes. What tools do they need to become familiar with? What pages on your website will be helpful to them? Make sure new members know where these resources are so they can get the most out of their membership.
Retaining and Engaging

No matter how well you do recruiting new members and making the sign-up process easy, if you can’t keep your members, all your recruitment efforts will be wasted. That’s why we’re spending a large part of this post on retention and engagement.

Retaining your current members and keeping them engaged will ensure the long-term health and vitality of your association. Not only that, but having actively engaged members will be one of your biggest recruitment resources. And the cycle continues!

Making Engagement A Priority

Set SMART goals for engagement.

Define goals for member engagement that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. Let those shape your retention and engagement efforts.
Determine what engagement metrics you’ll use.

The “M” in smart lives here - if you can’t measure engagement effectively, how will you know if you’re meeting your goals? Here’s a great resource for measuring member engagement.

Segment members into groups and develop buyer (member) personas.

Are there a few different kinds of people that tend to join your association? Get to know as much as you can about them, and use these carefully curated personas to shape everything you do. Learn more about buyer personas here.

Use a solid, modern membership management software.

Not sure how you’d accomplish numbers 19-21? Using a robust Association Management Software (AMS) will allow you to collect and analyze data on your current members, and much more.

Determine what problems your members depend on you to solve.

This step should coincide with developing your buyer (member) personas. If you know what problems your members need solutions to, you can create content specifically for that, much to the delight of your members!

Develop the value proposition you offer your members.

What do your members value most about being a part of your association? Make sure you know your value proposition, and make sure everything you do communicates it. If it does, your members will share it, and help bring in new members.
Maintain an interactive website where members can engage with you and other members.

Your website is one of the best places to keep your association’s community vibrant and engaged. Make sure it is easy-to-navigate and there are opportunities on your site for members to stay connected to you and to each other.

Set up and manage engaging member forums.

Whether it’s hosted on your website or not, having helpful and informative forums for your members is a great way to keep them engaged and invested.

Use smart email marketing campaigns to keep members informed, engaged and interested.

Send out regular updates with things like new benefits, industry news or member news that make members feel connected to what’s going on in your association.

Staying Active in Social Media

Leverage social media platforms.

Social media isn’t just for recruiting new members - it’s a great way to keep your current members engaged! There is lots of room to have fun and get creative with this one.

Determine the right social media outlets for engagement.

Just like you did for determining the right social media outlets for recruiting new members, you should research where your current members are hanging out (likely the same as potential members), and be active there.
Promote your events before, during and after.

Social media is a great way to recruit for your events, as well as to build anticipation for them. Promote your events on social media, and post live updates and recaps afterwards that will encourage anyone who didn’t attend to come to the next event!

Leverage pictures and videos on social media.

A great way to make your association relatable and build trust is to share pictures and videos of events and meetings. It also allows those who were unable to attend to feel connected and still be a part of things.

Interact with your members on social media.

Don’t just post your own events and news on social media - use it as a tool to interact with and promote your members. Liking, commenting, or replying to comments on relevant posts is a great way to stay engaged with your members, and to keep a pulse on what they’re up to.

Share what goes on behind-the-scenes at your association on social media.

Let your members see what the day-to-day is like at your association. Whether it’s a behind-the-scenes picture, a funny moment, or a party, it’s a great way to make members feel connected to the association as a whole.

Measure your results!

The practical application of #20 - measure the results of your engagement efforts with whatever metrics you’ve determined to use. Knowing what worked and what didn’t work will help shape your future efforts.
Providing Valuable and Interactive Content

35. **Send out a survey to members to understand them better and collect data.**

This can be done through email, social media or both. Having members answer simple surveys is a great way to help you understand their needs and challenges better, so that you can figure out ways to better serve them.

36. **Send out an online quiz.**

Using a tool like [Playbuzz](#) to make a quiz that is funny, challenging, interesting or nostalgic is a fun way to keep members engaged with your association.

37. **Share industry trends or hacks.**

Don’t just share information about your association, share industry information that your members will appreciate. Members will see your association as the go-to place for information about your industry.

38. **Send a regular email newsletter**

Include any or all of #36-37, plus anything that’s new at your association. Like we said in #16 - this is a great place to celebrate new members, as well as to celebrate current members and their recruitment efforts.

39. **Have a blog with useful information, tips and insights about your industry and things your members care about.**

(Yes, this is a repeat, but it’s oh so important for keeping members engaged as well as acquiring new ones!). Create separate topics that address recruiting, onboarding, and retaining members.
Share “best of” lists for your industry.

A big part of keeping members engaged is creating and distributing compelling content that your member WANTS to read and engage with. A “best of” list is a great way to provide members with value content that is industry-specific.

Give valuable training and education.

This is a BIG ONE. Training and education are fantastic ways to provide value to your members. Make sure you are creating top-quality resources, whether it be webinars, live events, videos or readable content.

Introduce new training/education programs or update current ones that may be getting outdated.

You don’t want your members to ever run out of things to learn from your association. Make sure that your programs aren’t getting stale and outdated by introducing new ones regularly as well as updated older ones.

Partner with other organizations to give members the training they want.

If your association doesn’t have the resources to provide members with the training they are asking for, utilize your relationships with other organizations or businesses to make that happen.

Add value at every step of the member journey.

This really comes down to perspective. If everything your association does is motivated by the question, “what value does this add to prospective or current members?” You’ll be able to make better decisions that are member focused. And your members will notice.
Delighting Your Members at Every Step

Be active in your niche.

People like to think they’re part of something that makes a difference. Are you doing enough to get the word out about what difference your association is making in the world?

Celebrate your members!

Whether they’ve gotten a promotion, an award, or have done something great in their community, make sure you’re recognizing your members and making them feel appreciated.

Provide perks for engagement or achievement.

Offer prizes or discounts as special rewards for members who are engaged. It could be for bringing the most people to an event, or for reading every email newsletter - anything! Make sure members who are actively engaged feel appreciated.

Provide freebies for retention.

Give a freebie or reward for increments of membership—5 years, 10 years, etc. It could be something as simple as a plaque or a reduced renewal rate, anything that will reward members for their length of membership.

Create upsell campaigns.

Do you offer different levels of membership or additional services that can be purchased? Create campaigns for members to engage further by increasing their membership level or signing up for additional services that you offer.
Adapt and change with member feedback.

Don’t get stuck doing the same things over and over again just because that’s how you’ve always done them. Listen to your members, and make changes based on their needs.

We hope these tips and insights will be helpful to you as you continue your quest of bringing in new members and delighting your current ones!

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