



**August 2012**

### **Avoid Membership Renewal Mistakes**

As hard as it is to believe, there are associations and nonprofits that do not commit to the work needed for making their annual membership renewals a priority.

Many organizations simply send out a generic once-a-year renewal notice without any additional effort. This business-as-usual approach is a big mistake.

Member dependent groups are seeing an increasing number of individuals who are questioning the continuation of their memberships. And our current economic climate is another reason this is not a time for a passive approach to renewals.

You can improve improve your member retention if you use a structured focus that emphasizes personal contact. Here are six tips that will increase the effectiveness of your renewal efforts.

**Organize your renewal campaign** as if it's your most important activity of the year. Create definite goals with an action plan for achieving your numbers.

**Recruit persistent people** who are your get-it-done folks for follow-ups. Identify and assign personal connection match ups, and then do the follow up to make sure the contacts are being made. Remember, the everybody-try-to-call-somebody-on-the-list routine rarely works!

**Individualize renewal requests;** and certainly don't address them to Dear Member. Supplement initial communications with telephone calls and personal visits.

**Communicate specific value and benefit** to your members. What problem do your members have that being a part of your organization will solve?

**The best renewal activity** is one that is ongoing. Work to get members engaged. Reach out to those whose attendance has been declining. Make sure you regularly let your members know they are appreciated. It's difficult for people to feel valued if they hear from you only when it's time to ask for money.

**Be sure to acknowledge** each renewal with a personalized thank you, and have a process that ensures your members are getting the positive experience they paid for.

If your organization needs to improve its approach to renewals, following these action steps will yield positive results. Finally, a lesson I use to help associations and nonprofits with their renewals is this: **You get what you follow up on.**

### Resource for Strategic Planning

"Hardy was my mentor and leader in our 18 month journey completing Phase I of the US Jaycees Strategic Plan. I was repeatedly amazed by his capacity to draw out the best from our team members. Hardy's experience, intellect and capacity for supporting the role players was an inspiration to me and something that will stay with me for a long time in the future.

Should you find yourself in a position to align forces with Hardy, I would recommend you do so. Immediately. Like me, you will be glad you did! "

#### **Noel Bailey, Contract Management, PGBA (Blue Cross of South Carolina)**

This monthly newsletter is written to benefit leaders of associations, nonprofits, community groups, and volunteer based organizations.

My email address is [hardy@hardysmith.com](mailto:hardy@hardysmith.com) and telephone number is [386-451-0652](tel:386-451-0652).

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss your organization's needs and how I might be able to help you with practical, easy to implement solutions.

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