



CHAPTER MEMBER RETENTION

Steps To Achieving New Membership

1. Make contact with the prospective member.
2. Get to know the prospective member — ask open-ended questions and listen to the answers.
3. Try to get the prospect to agree on a position or an issue or concern that can lead to a new membership (or renewal of an existing one).
4. Show the prospect how membership ties into solving his or her concern.
5. Then — and not before then — explain the advantages of Chapter membership, particularly as they relate to the prospect's concerns. Finally, attempt to close the membership agreement.

Suggested Responses To Objections

- I understand.
- I will accept that.
- What should we start doing?
- What should we stop doing?
- That was yesterday; what can we do about it now?
- Even if that were true...
- What can we do to change it?
- What better option do we have?
- How about giving us a chance?
- Why don't you join us to help change it?
- I still believe it's the best option we have going for us.

Handling Objections

- Many of those who are reluctant to join now will join when we continue to ask them.
- Reasons given for not joining are often not strongly held.
- The first objections given are often not the real or most important reasons for not joining.
- Objections are often based on lack of information or on incorrect information.
- Try to identify the real objections and provide sufficient information to overturn or minimize the objection compared with the value of membership.
- An excuse for not joining may be the result of our not having spent enough time to establish a positive relationship and find out about the prospect's wants, needs, and concerns.

Answering Hard Questions

It is natural for potential members to raise an objection, even when they think your proposition is a good one. They are merely asking you to provide some justification for their decision to join the Chapter. So, be prepared to hear some "standard" arguments from potential members or from members who are threatening to revoke their membership.

Here are some of the typical Questions:

Question: "There isn't any reason for me to join. I get all the benefits anyway."

Answer:

1. No, you don't. If you are not a member, you do not have a voice in what we do. You do not have a right to tell us your professional concerns or negotiate priorities or whom to elect as chapter officers. You do not have a right to access Chapter services.
2. You benefit from the efforts of Chapter members. Therefore, you should help pay your share of the costs for those benefits.
3. Solidarity and unity are other reasons for you to belong. We need the strength of 100% membership to ensure that all Chapter concerns are met. A united chapter better addresses advocacy and professional development for its members.

Question: "What if I do not always agree with the Chapter?"

Answer:

1. Few people agree with 100 percent of the decisions made by any organization. However, that does not keep them from remaining members. On the other hand, if you are not a member then you cannot make changes, nor do you have a right to complain.
2. As a Chapter member, it is your right to disagree. And it is your responsibility to help change what you do not like. As a member, you have dozens of opportunities to change the direction of the Chapter. But, if you are not a member, you cannot influence the change.

Question: "What voice do I have in what the Chapter does?"

Answer:

Each individual member helps decide the Chapter's goals and programs. Members elect the officers and representatives. Any member may choose to run for these positions. Through your elected leaders, you have a voice at the state and national levels, as well as the local level. If you want to use your voice, speak up.

Question: "Does the Chapter do anything for students?"

Answer:

One of the goals of the Chapter is to advocate accountancy in our schools. We maintain relationships with schools to assist the public in viewing education from a positive stance.

Question: "I just do not believe in joining any group."

Answer:

People joining hand-in-hand with others to achieve goals is how this nation was created. It may sound trite, but together we all can do what none of us can do alone.

Question: "Can I afford it?"

Answer:

The question is--can you afford not to join? Consider your dues investment in the chapter as a kind of "job insurance" and an investment in the future of your profession.