

# The Membership Management Report

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THE MONTHLY IDEA SOURCE  
FOR THOSE WHO RECRUIT,  
MANAGE AND SERVE MEMBERS

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## SECURE MEETING SPONSORSHIPS

### 'Can't Miss' Sponsorship Ideas

By Erin Sandage

Offering meeting sponsorship opportunities does more than just cover expenses or raise funds. Unique sponsorship ideas can engage companies and keep your meetings fresh for members, says Bryn Reese, practice leader, Corporate Sponsorship for CS-Effect (Chicago, IL).

"Industry presence is so much more than column wraps; it's about building member responsiveness to partners through novel experiences," she says. "Remember to offer new assets on a multiyear basis to lock in for mutual planning purposes and to ensure your meeting remains in corporate budgets with projected year over year growth."

Reese shares three sponsorship ideas organizations should think about incorporating into their next meeting:

- 1. Offer valet service.** Reese says many associations offer parking and shuttle sponsorships, but they should go a step further and have valet sponsors as well, especially for speakers, VIPs and volunteers. Many times speakers are rushing to make your event, and volunteers are often overlooked at high-attendance meetings. Offering valet is a way to recognize and engage both.
- 2. Offer at least one no-cost option.** No-cost sponsorships, like a speaking or marketing opportunity, are a great option for smaller associations. Reese says associations can offer multiple low-cost opportunities, but if they choose to only offer one, make sure many sponsors can

participate to create significant revenue return, without diluting the impact. "That's value-add, and it does add up." She also advises offering this type of sponsorship to companies that have made an early commitment, then to new sponsors as an extension of their value proposition. Additional slots can be offered to the remaining companies as a retention incentive.

- 3. Give loyal sponsors a sneak peek.** Reese says loyal sponsors appreciate knowing about emerging high-value options before receiving a prospectus or viewing online. "Early quiet announcements to your top five sponsors voice-to-voice are validating and a value-added incentive," she adds. "Every year sponsors make tough decisions regarding meeting attendance and budgets, so stay ahead of your competition."

No matter which sponsorship opportunities you decide on, make sure they help improve member engagement.

"Associations exist to serve members first. If a sponsorship asset does not improve member engagement, then it's really just a flat promotion. Members appreciate the revenue benefit of sponsorship and want to interact with companies in meaningful, not artificial ways," says Reese. ♦

Source: Bryn Reese, Practice Leader, Corporate Sponsorship, CS-Effect, Chicago, IL. Phone (773) 991-1210. Email: [brynreese@gmail.com](mailto:brynreese@gmail.com). Website: <https://www.cs-effect.com/>

# Publicize Your Membership

Don't just tout your member number; couch it in attention-grabbing ways. Staff at one Tennessee library, for example, are able to say they have 50 percent of their suburb's residents and 27 percent of the entire community as members. ♦

# Learn From the Competition

- To discover new and better ways to manage your organization and serve members, get on other member organizations' mailing lists. It's amazing what you can discover from reviewing others' materials. ♦

## THE MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT REPORT

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# WILEY

## ADVOCACY EVENTS

# Explore Advocacy Events That Work Best for You

Some organizations carve out a dedicated day to engage lobbyists and politicians on Capitol Hill. Others establish annual meetings to educate and rally public support around policies that impact members. Advocacy isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor, and associations that understand this are more likely to drive positive change for the industries they represent. Here three association professionals share how their advocacy days and relevant programs move the needle in the right direction:

"FPA Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., plays a central role in educating federal policymakers on the importance of financial planning and the critical role financial planners have in the lives of millions of Americans. It's a unique annual opportunity to gather FPA members from across the nation to explore policy and regulatory issues impacting our members, their businesses, and their clients. As an association with a nationwide chapter system engaged in advocacy efforts at local and state levels, our Advocacy Day on 'The Hill' also provides opportunities for our members to learn and bring insights to their chapters to hone FPA's advocacy priorities further. As FPA leads the effort to elevate our profession and create a better understanding of the importance of financial planning, FPA Advocacy Day helps our association convene with a unified voice as we confer with lawmakers to help the financial planning message resonate with Americans."

— Ben Lewis, Chief Communications Officer,  
Financial Planning Association, Denver, CO.

Phone (303) 867-7190. Email: [blewis@onefpa.org](mailto:blewis@onefpa.org). Website: [www.onefpa.org](http://www.onefpa.org)

"The vehicle supplier industry continues to face unprecedented challenges as global politics and technology evolve rapidly. More than ever, legislative and regulatory issues directly impact the vehicle supplier industry, and MEMA member voices must be heard to ensure a bright future for manufacturers and a competitive U.S. marketplace.

"MEMA The Vehicle Suppliers Association held our 2023 Spring into Advocacy Legislative Summit from April 26-27 in Washington, D.C. The summit offered a unique opportunity for vehicle suppliers to engage directly with lawmakers and regulators making important decisions that will impact all vehicle suppliers for years to come. This year's legislative summit highlighted critical issues, including the transition to net-zero vehicle emissions, trade and China, vehicle safety and AVs, workforce challenges and more."

— Bill Long, President and CEO,  
MEMA The Vehicle Suppliers Association, Washington, D.C.  
Email: [info@mema.org](mailto:info@mema.org). Website: [www.mema.org](http://www.mema.org)

"Families and communities continue to face unprecedented challenges. Policy-makers need an awareness and understanding of the relevance of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) to proactively address issues related to financial literacy, food insecurity and quality childcare. AAFCS members are poised and positioned to inform and impact both state and national policies. Many AAFCS state affiliates host 'Day at the Capitol' events to increase the visibility and value of our mission and work. As a result, these grassroots advocacy events can provide an even greater impact than national level events to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities." ♦

— Lori A. Myers, PHD, CFCS, ICE-CCP, Interim Executive Director,  
Senior Director: Credentialing, Education, Research,  
American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), Alexandria, VA.  
Phone (703) 706-4602. Email: [Lmyers@aafcs.org](mailto:Lmyers@aafcs.org). Website: [www.aafcs.org](http://www.aafcs.org)

## MEMBER BENEFITS

# Consider New Benefits With Member Appeal

**Q** Describe a membership perk you offer that's both unique and that other types of membership organizations might choose to offer.

“One of our member benefits at the International Coaching Federation (ICF) is access to what we call the ‘Member Toolkit.’ This is a compilation of highly tangible resources and templates that members can put into practice right away. New members are encouraged to really dig into the toolkit as it’s very immense. An example of one of the included resources is a sample coaching agreement. It highlights what should be included in a coaching agreement — our members find it very valuable and particularly helpful if they are just starting out or wanting to see what ICF recommends.”

— Kristin Kelly, Director of Ethics, Compliance and Culture, International Coaching Federation, Lexington, KY.  
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Website: <https://coachingfederation.org/>

“At the [National Strength and Conditioning Association \(NSCA\)](#), we recently launched [NSCA.TV](#), which is a collection of education and professional development videos curated specifically for our members. This new member benefit was developed through feedback from our professional community who appreciate the value of NSCA’s academic journals but prefer video content that ‘bridges the gap’ between the science and its practical application. Like any new member benefit, it’s taking time to train our members to access [NSCA.TV](#) and use it regularly; posting

CEU-eligible content has been a particularly successful effort in expanding its use.”

— J. Scott Douglas, Senior Director, Membership and Program Development, National Strength and Conditioning Association, Colorado Springs, CO.  
Phone (719) 632-6722, ext. 116. Email: [scott.douglas@nsca.com](mailto:scott.douglas@nsca.com)  
Website: [www.nsca.com](http://www.nsca.com)

“Many years ago we launched a prepaid legal plan from PrePaid Legal Services, Inc. for The Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, in Virginia. Our members are able to have access to attorneys providing legal support for individuals and their families, companies and employees at a discounted affordable monthly fee. The ability for families to get their will done at no extra cost makes it an attractive employee benefit. Employees feel supported by employers who care about their daily issues. Small-business owners are grateful for debt-collection help, contract review and letters and phone calls on their behalf for the same monthly fee. Most people simply like the fact that they have access to attorneys for unlimited advice and counsel with every membership. This benefit is congruent with most mission statements to support and protect their members and is well received. Add to it the best identity theft plan in the nation according to *Forbes*, and it is a winning combination for any professional organization to offer.” ♦

— Louise Yale, Independent Associate, PrePaid Legal Services,  
Phone (703) 622-7972. Email: [benefits@peopleneedthis.com](mailto:benefits@peopleneedthis.com)  
Website: [LSYale.WeAreLegalShield.com](http://LSYale.WeAreLegalShield.com)

## THE COST OF MEMBERSHIP

# Should Membership Be Free?

Membership dues can make up a big chunk of an organization’s overall revenue, so why would it make sense to give memberships away for free? The answer: Because giving a free membership is a great way to introduce future supporters to your organization.

The American Camp Association (ACA) has been offering a free year of membership for first-time members since 2013.

“ACA began offering a free year of membership to connect with people in the summer camp and youth program industry who might not be involved with ACA,” explains President and CEO Tom Rosenberg. “For many young people, ACA might be the first professional organization they become involved with, and offering a free year of membership is a way to share helpful resources and educational opportunities.”

Many of the new memberships come from camp directors who encourage their staff to join ACA. The directors receive an unlimited number of coupons or promo codes from the ACA,

which their staff can use to sign up for the year of free membership online. The coupon or code is valid until the end of the calendar year and begins when the member signs up. Once the free year is over, the member receives a renewal notice to join ACA. If the member’s director wants to help them renew, they receive another coupon for half off the second year.

Rosenberg says, on average, the ACA sees about 1,600 new members take advantage of this option each year.

“At ACA, we believe that our resources are highly valuable and beneficial. We consistently aim to provide equitable access for individuals and organizations in the industries of summer camp, education and youth development. Not only does this program help us achieve these goals, but it also helps us share our resources while welcoming new members.” ♦

Source: Tom Rosenberg, President/CEO, American Camp Association, Martinsville, IN. Phone (765) 342-8456. Email: [pr@acacamps.org](mailto:pr@acacamps.org). Website: <https://www.acacamps.org>

## NURTURING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

# Leadership Academy Helps Members Grow Their Skills Through Volunteering

The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA; Montvale, NJ) launched its [IMA Leadership Academy](#) (IMALA) as a way to provide its members with leadership education and skills to advance their career and build their personal and professional brand.

“IMALA is one of our top recognition programs, with about 6,000 of our 140,000 members currently participating,” says Patricia Stefanczyk, IMA’s vice president of governance and volunteer relations. “It’s a critical component to fulfilling our mission to serve our members.”

The program, available at no additional cost to members, includes a monthly webinar series on coaching, team building, conflict resolution and problem-solving created and delivered by volunteers; regional and global volunteer leadership opportunities; a mentoring network; and access to leadership news via a column in IMA’s Strategic Finance magazine. It also includes a leadership recognition program that allows members to move up five levels of leadership, from Pewter to Platinum, as they complete IMALA courses and participate in increasing levels of leadership with IMA.

Each leadership level offers a digital badge members can use on their social media. As of January 2023, the organization had issued 4,066 Bronze Level badges; 4,280 Gold Level badges; 5,531 Pewter Level badges; 2,124 Platinum Level badges; and

5,776 Silver Level badges.

The program is promoted via a landing page on the IMA website, in their [newsletter](#), in an every-other-month leadership column and an annual ad in their Strategic Finance magazine and in PowerPoint presentations to chapters.

“We find the program to be really impactful for our members because, again, it’s building their personal brand, and it’s also a win for us because we’re building our leadership pipeline and providing something different and unique to our members, which is part of our value proposition,” she says. “For example, this program provides young professionals who are not comfortable public speaking, an opportunity to learn. We start them out by being facilitators. We train them and then they get to present webinars attended by between 3,100 and 3,500 members and non-members. It’s not always about the tangible thing in your hand — the plaque or the swag — it’s many times about how we are helping them to build their leadership, and ours.”

Also, the more members are engaged, says Stefanczyk, the happier they are and the more they are likely to renew their membership with IMA. ♦

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Source: Patricia (Pat) Stefanczyk, CAE, PMP, Vice President of Governance and Volunteer Relations, Institute of Management Accountants, Montvale, NJ. Phone (201) 573-9000. Email: [pstefanczyk@imanet.org](mailto:pstefanczyk@imanet.org). Website: <https://www.imanet.org>

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## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION BYLAWS

# Three Common Questions About Association Bylaws

Nisha Thakker, a partner with Tenenbaum Law Group PLLC (Washington, DC), answers three common questions associations ask about their bylaws:

### ***How do you stop the old school mentality from constantly creeping back in?***

“Find a way in your governance to respect the historical perspective but not to let past presidents and previous board members stay so involved that the organization can’t evolve. One way to do that is by creating a Past Presidents’ Council. Give them a voice and respect the historic perspective, but allow the organization to continue to evolve without the expectation of lifetime leadership involvement.”

### ***How often should we be updating our bylaws or reviewing our bylaws?***

“The sweet spot is somewhere between three and five years. If you’ve drafted your bylaws well, and you’ve created flexibility and nimbleness, you can push it closer to five years. One reason to look at it sooner than that is in case the statute changed in your state to be able to grant you more flexibility in your governance.”

### ***How can we ensure our bylaws are helping us create a diverse representation on our board?***

“When we talk about diversity, we’re not necessarily limiting ourselves to the traditional DEI of race, age and gender. We’re really talking about experience level too and how to fill the leadership positions in an organization to make sure that your governance is broadly representative of your membership.” ♦

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Source: Nisha Thakker, Esq., Partner, Tenenbaum Law Group PLLC, Washington, DC. Phone (202) 221-8004. Email: [nthakker@TenenbaumLegal.com](mailto:nthakker@TenenbaumLegal.com). Website: <https://www.TenenbaumLegal.com/>

## MEMBER DIVERSITY

# Track Progress on Diversity With Demographics Reports

By Gary Enos

For associations seeking to promote greater diversity within their profession, issuing periodic member demographics reports can serve as a helpful tracker of progress. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) publishes a member demographics report annually, with both association members and public policymakers seen as target audiences.

“The data are important to the members,” says Mike Skiados, AIA’s managing director for membership strategy and engagement. “Also, we want to paint a clear picture to legislators about how many members we have and who they are.”

AIA leaders see progress on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in architecture as an ongoing journey. In an organization with a traditionally male and Caucasian membership, Skiados says the current data “doesn’t show where we want to be.”

But there are signs of progress. In 2021, the AIA board for the first time included more women than men. The annual profile of the membership has become a tool for benchmarking and can help demonstrate the effectiveness of organization initiatives, such as the institute’s programming that promotes leadership roles for women.

Skiados says AIA compiles the annual reports internally, based on data provided by members electronically. At the end of each calendar year, it shares with members the membership count it will use for the entire following year. It uses Census Bureau breakdowns to report on membership demographics. It also reports on the profile of newer members, showing greater

diversity among newer arrivals to the organization.

Because reporting demographic information is not mandatory for AIA members, the institute emphasizes the report shouldn’t be interpreted as a full representation of AIA membership or the profession at large. Also, Skiados says around 17 percent of respondents to the member demographics survey choose not to answer at least one question among race, gender identity or age. “We email people in an effort to get them to update their information,” he says.

AIA seeks to combine its release of the data with communications that connect with members on a more personal level, exploring why newer members of the association pursued a career in architecture. “We communicate this through video, in an authentic presentation from them in which they share their journey,” Skiados says.

“We want architecture professionals, and those who are thinking about entering the architecture profession, to understand our demographics as an organization and as a profession,” he adds. “This helps individuals know who we were, who we are now, and most importantly, who we aspire to be in the future.”

The institute believes associations in many professions could benefit from this kind of reporting to help grow a membership that more closely reflects the communities they serve. ♦

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Source: Mike Skiados, Managing Director, Membership Strategy and Engagement, American Institute of Architects, Washington, DC. Phone (800) 242-3837. Email: [mikeskiados@aia.org](mailto:mikeskiados@aia.org). Website: <https://www.aia.org>

## EVENT LIABILITY ISSUES

# Have a Comprehensive Policy and Approach in Place

In today’s litigious environment, organizers should anticipate that if a liability issue were to occur at their event, they will likely be named in the lawsuit, says Aaron Wolowiec, founder and president of Event Garde (Dallas, TX).

“What I’ve seen is that an attorney representing an injured attendee is initially going to name everyone,” he says. “They’re going to name the hotel, they’re going to name the organization and they’re going to try to name anyone else who is potentially connected to that issue or event. But ultimately, the facts of the incident will determine whether it sticks in a court of law.”

Certainly associations should consult with their insurance companies and attorneys to determine what level of insurance is right for them, he says, but beyond that, and almost more

importantly than that, is the association having in place a comprehensive plan intended to keep their members and attendees safe, be it for COVID-19 or a simple tripping hazard. “In a court of law, the judge is looking for a demonstration by the organization that they did as much as they possibly could to prevent the issue from happening in the first place,” he says. “If you’ve put together a layered approach to keeping people safe, and consistently follow it, the chances that your association will be held liable are certainly less than if you didn’t have that policy and procedure in place.” ♦

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Source: Aaron Wolowiec, MSA, CAE, CMP Fellow, Founder and President, Event Garde, Dallas, TX. Phone (616) 710-1891. Email: [aaron@eventgarde.com](mailto:aaron@eventgarde.com). Website: <https://eventgarde.com/>

## Strive to Build an Advocacy Base

Nicole Sevrey, communication specialist with Michigan Farm Bureau (Lansing, MI), says live events are a great starting point for building an advocacy base.

“You have a captive audience at a live event, and if there’s an issue that resonates with a majority of your members at that live event, that will kick things off really well for you,” she says.

At their organization’s annual meeting in 2017 when they launched their advocacy program, there was a regulation that was coming through the state government their members cared a lot about and wanted to weigh in on, says Sevrey: “We launched using that issue, and they submitted their comments to the agency director while they were at the meeting. They also opted in to receive future messages. Most advocacy platforms give you the ability to text a keyword, such as MIFARMS, to sign up, which is super easy for members to do at an event when they probably only have their mobile device with them. Like any

texting program, they also have the ability to opt out.”

Their other promotional materials used to encourage members to opt-in include videos and banners they take to events, but their most successful, she says, is a business card that shares instructions for opting in and why.

You never know when your advocacy program is going to take off, says Sevrey. During the pandemic, they used their platform to promote an issue with garden centers and greenhouses that ended up spurring both members and nonmembers to take action: “In a span of only 48 hours, we grew our advocacy base from 10,000 to 52,000. It just takes that one issue to really resonate, and the more you can have campaigns on issues that resonate with the broader base of your members, the better.” ♦

Source: Nicole Sevrey, Public Policy Communications Specialist, Michigan Farm Bureau, Lansing, MI. Phone (517) 679-5344. Email: [nsevrey@michfb.com](mailto:nsevrey@michfb.com). Website: <https://new.michfb.com/>

### FACILITATION TIPS AND TRICKS

## Enhance Your Facilitation Know-How

By Kim Pawlak

Associations are comprised of many impassioned leaders with varying ideas about what the future of their association looks like, but there’s usually disparity in how to get there, says Lowell Aplebaum, CEO of Vista Cova (Gaithersburg, MD), who presents workshops on this topic with Aaron Wolowiec, founder and president of Event Garde (Dallas, TX).

“The way you try to bring harmony and unity is by helping them to come to agreement, by helping them to understand one another and by building a culture of respect for one another — all things emboldened by facilitation,” he says. “The structure of facilitation ideally creates a space for curiosity, for listening, for collaboration and for mutual understanding.”

Aplebaum shares this four-step process for improving your facilitation skills:

1. State what you were mindful of during the meeting so you can be self-reflective.
2. Look at facilitation feedback as a gift rather than a criticism. When you get feedback, how can you learn from that, and how can you express appreciation for it?
3. Be self-reflective over what may change the next time you facilitate, what you’ve heard and what you’ve learned.
4. Be open to constructive feedback.

“It’s also important that groups are fluent in what constructive feedback is so that the mode and the tone is meant to build and not to take down,” he says. “These four steps, as a cycle of facilitation feedback, builds stronger facilitators because it has the

self-reflection, it has the modification, it has the appreciation and then it has the construction of what the future could look like.”

Associations can improve facilitation, he says, through:

- Intentional design. Making sure you have all the background information, knowledge and perspectives you need.
- Intentional invitation. Ensuring diverse perspectives and voices are in the room and that people aren’t there just because of their title but there’s meaning to why they’re invited.
- Inclusive participation. Ensuring all voices you have in the room are able and invited to participate.
- Meaningful evaluation. Understanding you can always improve your dynamics.

“Organizations that invest in elevating their capacity for facilitation internally will see global impact across their organization,” says Aplebaum. “If you have a higher degree of facilitation expertise, that can impact every staff meeting and every board meeting. That can impact every gathering of members and every focus group. Naturally, as associations, we gather and gather and gather and gather. Facilitation makes those more meaningful, more impactful, even more fun, but can really elevate the potential for any gathering.” ♦

Sources: Lowell Aplebaum, FASAE, CAE, CPF, CEO, Vista Cova, Gaithersburg, MD. Email: [Lowell@vistacova.com](mailto:Lowell@vistacova.com). Website: <https://www.vistacova.com>

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## ATTENTION-GRABBING PUBLICATIONS

# Ten Ways to Increase Your Publication's Readership

Your organization's newsletter or magazine informs members of important progress, recognizes valued contributors and elevates your image of service and membership value.

But it can only accomplish that if members are taking the time to read it.

Carefully plan content, placement and length of stories, along with appropriate photos, graphics, charts and illustrations, to best accomplish your newsletter goals.

In doing so, remember that most members will read your publication much the same way they read a daily newspaper. They may read every section, turn directly to a favorite section or skim just certain pages. Special sections may be saved if they contain coupons, calendars or other information that will be useful in coming days.

How can you adapt some of the variety a daily newspaper offers into your organization's publications to increase readership? Here are 10 ways that may help:

- 1. Use as many names as possible in stories.** Names are news, especially when they are easy to read with bold type for emphasis and woven into important information about your events or programs. This also helps recognize those who have helped your cause in some way.
- 2. Feature one or two brief people profiles in each issue.** They need not be long and detailed — the shorter they are, the more you can use. Readers will begin to look forward to this addition. Use small, head-and-shoulder shots, if possible.
- 3. Invite readers to be contributors.** Find a variety of ways that allow readers to assist with content, such as asking them to offer their favorite time-management technique to share with others, or a few sentences about "the best volunteer job I ever had." Use all you can and hold extras for the next issue.
- 4. Print positive, unsolicited input when appropriate.** When a member sends a short note with member dues, include it in a highlighted box on an appropriate page. Ask permission first, however. Readers will begin looking for regular messages after a few issues or begin writing some of their own with their checks.
- 5. Increase distribution.** Leave a few copies of your publication in the lobby; at the front desk; and in the cafeteria, a lounge or a coffee room. Waiting areas are especially attractive because people may be looking for something to do. Have enough of a stack available so they know it's fine if they take it with them.
- 6. Include a "tell a friend" coupon.** Print a small form in the next issue inviting existing readers to add a friend's name to your mailing list.
- 7. Offer a special "extra" in each issue.** It may be season-specific, such as a gift shop or cafeteria discount or special passes to a community activity associated with your organization. Be creative and have fun packaging incentives you have always offered but highlight them graphically and attractively in each publication.
- 8. Include information readers will want to save.** If space permits, include a recipe or quarterly or annual calendar of events, knowing that the longer recipients keep the publication, the more likely they are to read all of its contents.
- 9. Send copies to local media.** News editors and reporters may use your newsletter as a source for article topics, particularly if information has broad public interest (e.g., programs and events open to the community or profiles of experts in your organization). When the media uses your publication as an occasional source, others notice that your publications are valued resources and may take a closer look as well.
- 10. Entertain readers in an informative fashion.** Try having a mystery member in each issue, giving hints to help readers solve the identity and submit an answer. Print the answer in the next issue with the names of those who guessed correctly. ♦

## ENTERTAINING IDEAS

# Launch Your Membership Campaign With Fun

Looking for a way to build enthusiasm for your next membership campaign? Why not use a parody of the popular Monopoly board game? Here's how it works:

1. First, divide your membership area into distinct neighborhoods or territories.
2. Enlist one team captain for each territory to have a ratio of one captain for every 10-member team.
3. Schedule a membership reception for each territory at different times.
4. Have team captains each contact 10 members informing them of the reception and encouraging them to bring one prospective member.
5. Create a game board that incorporates the name of your organization as a visual: Higgins Chamber-opoly, for instance. Customize to feature each of your territories.
6. Take the board to each reception and allow members and prospects to roll the dice. If they land on Chance or Community Chest, they win donated prizes such as dinners, hotel stays or tickets to performances.
7. One final note: Check to be sure you are not violating any of the Monopoly game copyright laws.

Creating a unique member event is sure to boost attendance while giving all members a job assignment that will involve them more in owning the campaign. ♦

## EVALUATING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

# Give Value to Member Engagement Scoring

More associations are using formal engagement scoring to assess member behaviors and interactions with the organization. Use the scores to understand the exchange of value between the association and members and to call attention to top performance in the member activities you prioritize, says Bill Conforti, senior vice president of strategy and solutions at Association Analytics (Arlington, VA).

When an association is considering which member activities to include in an engagement scoring system, Conforti recommends three categories to consider:

- Activities related to operational outcomes, such as meeting attendance or product purchases.
- Activities related to the customer experience, such as responses to member satisfaction surveys.
- Activities linked to the organization's strategic objectives. If the association seeks to be the respected authority in its field, for example, downloading of published white papers would be an important measure.

The most important of these activities for an organization might count for 20 to 30 percent of the member engagement

score, Conforti explains. Lower-priority activities might count for 5 percent.

Some associations use gamification to build engagement. "The individual elements of the score should be gamified, but the overall scoring is more of an internal metric," Conforti says. "If you highly value meeting attendance, and you have members who have attended five meetings in a row, recognize them."

Instead of a personal "leaderboard" approach to member engagement, the idea is to focus on the member activities to which you have given the greatest weight in your scoring.

An important concept in engagement scoring is decay. "Something I did recently counts more than something I did a while ago," Conforti says. Association Analytics usually recommends tracking engagement activities over a rolling three-year period.

Conforti says Association Analytics will tend to examine organizational trends on these measures at least monthly. "Certainly organizations should be looking at this at least once a year," he says. ♦

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## MEMBERS AS VOLUNTEERS

# Tips for Engaging Your Members as Volunteers

When engaging your members as volunteers, you have to be very careful how you message it, says Beth Arritt, president and CEO of The Arritt Group (Springfield, VA).

"At the heart, remember, you're telling people, 'Please come work for us for free,'" she says. "Statements such as 'we need,' 'we're looking for' or 'we want' are not going to work. You need to frame it in a way that is beneficial for them: 'Here's a great opportunity for you to show your leadership in the industry,' or 'This is a great opportunity for you to network with people in a relaxed environment, or to showcase your leadership skills.'"

People volunteer for a number of reasons, says Arritt, but all those should be reasons that not only make them feel good about themselves and what they're doing but about who they're helping: "It feels good, and the messaging should reflect that."

Christy Reynolds, membership coordinator for the Texas Library Association (Austin, TX), recommends starting small by giving them a micro-volunteering opportunity that allows them to see the fun part of volunteering first. Because some of their conference speakers are authors or illustrators their member librarians love, she says, asking them to volunteer for two hours to convene a session of their favorite authors is a way to get them to see the fun and entice them to come back for a larger commitment. "Maybe next year they're on our conference planning committee, and that's more a year and a half commitment," she

says. "But it all starts with a smaller, intriguing element first."

Arritt and Reynolds share other ways to engage your members as volunteers:

- **Regularly touch base with them and keep them in the loop.** "We host a monthly officer hour [they call their volunteers officers] so that they can ask questions directly to me or other staff members," says Reynolds. "We also send out a monthly officer newsletter just to keep them updated with things happening that month, things that are due and things they need to do before conference. It reminds them that they're on the committee, and there's a little bit of work to do throughout the year, but not too much."
- **Build in reward and recognition.** "Knowing that you had an impact and then got recognition for that can be incredibly important in retaining volunteers throughout the year," says Arritt. "It doesn't have to be expensive. If you have a podcast, you could invite them to a panel and ask them why they volunteer and why they love it." ♦

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