

MEMBERSHIP

A Valuable Member Experience

The most traditional motivator for joining a professional association is to contribute one's support to a common voice and mutually shared goals. Additionally, the importance of tangible benefits grows as another strong motivator. As you assess your membership recruitment and retention strategies, it is important to keep both motivators in mind while you work toward establishing a valuable member experience.

Chapters can thrive when they focus and capitalize on their members' needs for professional growth, community, recognition, and leadership development.

Professional Growth

Members seek to become successful within their profession and, for some, within leadership positions in the chapter as well as the association. Your chapter can be instrumental in providing opportunities for your members to gain the tools and resources they need for that growth.

Community

Community is the result of your group's shared vision, values, and goals. A great community is best developed through positive communication and networking opportunities, which create a sense of belonging.

Recognition

Celebrating the efforts and talents of your members by establishing an award and reward program fosters community, gives professional credit to members, and motivates others to become more engaged. Incentivizing member efforts and announcing accomplishments also demonstrates collaboration.

Leadership Development

Leadership opportunities keep members interested, motivated, and energized to carry out the work of the chapter while ensuring its longevity and avoiding burn-out by seasoned leaders. Identify, evaluate, and groom your members for leadership growth with the perspective that the ownership of the chapter ultimately belongs to all members.

Valuable Member Experience

The main goal is to create a valuable member experience that nurtures the professionals within your chapter and will ultimately lead to growth of the chapter through increased membership retention and recruitment. Below are practical and proven recruitment and retention tips that will help you achieve this goal.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment: Ideas to Grow Your Membership

Your Audience:

- Know who you are recruiting:
 - *Nursing students*
 - *Internationals*
 - *Pain management, MD*
 - *Pharmacy reps*
- Identify and target your audience connections:
 - *Hospitals*
 - *Universities*
 - *Schools of nursing*
 - *Doctors' offices*
 - *NANN members that do not belong to a chapter*
 - *Former chapter members*
 - *Associate members (allied health professionals)*
 - *NINPs in your area who are not members.*
- Maintain a current database of members, former members, potential members, allied colleagues, and local industry representatives. Utilize NANN's list and label resources to maximize the reach of your communications.
- Adopt a high school and promote nursing to graduating seniors.
- Ask nurses from several hospitals to present grand rounds. They will bring their support systems (other nurses), and you can recruit them.
- Co-sponsoring an event with a local association of allied professionals has the potential to increase your member base.
- Sponsor chapter information booths at local recruitment days.
- Arrange to go to local institutions to meet with and discuss the benefits of belonging to NANN.
- Give nurse managers a supply of national and local brochures.
- Videotape a meeting and show it at different institutions.
- Bring "snacks" and information to institutions.
- Invite head nurses to a meeting and supply them with brochures.
- Develop a speaker's bureau. Offer these to head nurses in exchange for time to present information concerning NANN.
- Assist head nurses with the development of participation in NANN as part of the staff nurses' performance appraisal.

Your Meetings:

- Have a sign-in list at the door with a monitor to ensure that the names and contact information of attendees are captured.
- Always use name tags at meetings to refresh memories of who is who.
- Assign greeters to welcome guests.
- Use stickers to identify new and prospective members.
- Stock a table at your meeting with membership applications, educational brochures, and issues of past newsletters.

- Offer contact hours at every appropriate gathering.
- Schedule innovative speakers and publicize your meetings.
- Sponsor a social event, like a holiday party, to encourage networking and recruiting.
- Recruit during educational events or annual chapter conference.
- Position NANN membership as a plus for the clinical ladder.
- Offer a discounted conference fee for new members.
- Use a dynamic, known speaker as a drawing card.

After Your Meetings:

- Connect with a personal touch: a phone call, a face-to-face meeting individually or within a group, or a handwritten note.
- Send a personal thank you to non-members who have attended meetings.
- Plan follow up contact with guests and non-renewing members in a timely manner.
- Look at what you offer for local membership: local membership card, CEUs, networking, professional growth and expertise, etc. Make sure you can give specifics as people expect "something" for the money.

Your Members:

Encourage and equip your members to communicate the value of membership to others:

- Host a contest to see who can bring in the most members.
- Provide incentives like gift certificates and free registrations to members who recruit new members.
- Develop talking points for members to share with potential members. Plan how to respond to the following statements:
 - *It costs too much - point out what they get in return \$1/week*
 - *I'm too busy - too busy to improve their career or profession*
 - *I'll decide later - when and then as the time approaches - call them*
 - *I don't want to join now - invite them to a meeting with no pressure to join*
- At the close of the meeting, ask members to share the names and contact information of three colleagues who would have benefitted from the meeting. Add these names to your contact list.
- Ask members to personally invite at least three colleagues via a handwritten letter accompanied by the symposium brochure/registration form.
- Designate members as liaisons to relevant institutions in your region.
- If the institution is their professional home, they should:
 - Ensure an association promotional poster is posted
 - Provide membership information to new employees
 - Get names and contact information of new potential members
 - Follow-up with fellow employees with lapsed memberships: *"What did we miss?"*
 - Discuss support of the association with visiting industry representatives
- If the institution is not their professional home, they should plan for periodic visits to the institution to execute, as best they can, the items listed above.
- Offer a social hour at a meeting that attendance is earned by bringing a guest.

Promotion:

- Advertise in state board newsletter or hospital newsletter
- Mail educational flyers to local facilities and schools
- Develop a prospective packet for distribution

- Promote your meetings in newspapers, TV channels, medical or special newspapers, and the board of nursing newsletter.

Retention: Ideas to Keep Your Members

Your Meetings:

- Have a drawing for meeting attendees offering a free chapter membership.
- Rotate meetings at different facilities.
- Provide a door prize for meeting attendees.
- Create a sign-up sheet for refreshments at meetings to involve more people.

Your Members:

- Create good communication with your members.
- Conduct a survey via phone, mail, or email to evaluate members' needs and satisfaction with the chapter, then fulfill them.
- Tell people who are not active chapter members that you still appreciate their support.
- Announce meetings well in advance. If possible, develop an annual calendar of activities.
- Foster a sense of ownership to the members - the chapter belongs to them.
- Assess why members leave.
- Check the efficiency of how meeting notices are sent. Confirm the accuracy of members' addresses.
- Develop and distribute a local membership directory.
- Send out a membership and renewal form with your newsletter.
- Announce and recognize accomplishments in your newsletter and at chapter meetings.
- Apply for chapter awards to celebrate your accomplishments at the national level.

Member Engagement:

- Get your members involved - first with small tasks, then expand.
- Develop a point system for participation:
 - Chapter projects
 - Community projects
 - Research projects
 - Chapter news for publication
 - Committee work
- Groom potential leaders.
- If you ask for volunteers, make sure you involve them.
- Have clear time frames and deadlines.
- Continually recognize member's contributions.

Networking:

- Network and combine meetings with other chapters.
- Sponsor a community action drive for more face-to-face time among members.
- Establish a buddy system, pairing long-term members with new members. It keeps the established member engaged and reinforces the importance of the chapter while offering a great benefit/resource to your new members.
- Arrange tours of new facilities.

Membership Tracking

On an annual basis, track the number of renewals versus the number of new members. These figures will assist you in knowing if your recruitment or retention strategies need more attention.

- $(\# \text{ Renewals} / \# \text{ Expected Renewals}) \times 100 = \text{Retention Rate (\%)}$
- $[(\# \text{ New Members} - \# \text{ Lapsed Members}) / \# \text{ Expected Renewals}] \times 100 = \text{Growth Rate (\%)}$

For healthy overall growth in your chapter, your retention rate should be between 75-80% and your growth rate between 3-5%. Set these as your goals and refer to this document as you develop your annual membership recruitment and retention plan.

Membership reports are available weekly from the national office.