

What Now? New Member Contact Strategies

by Lynn Waller



You've done the hard part—recruiting new members—so now what?

The first year of membership is crucial to building a relationship with your mem-

bers and getting that first renewal. Creating a stream of coordinated new member contacts is the key to building this relationship and is one of the most important things you do for your association.

You've already "sold" them, so now how do you engage them? Most associations have so many programs and engagement activities that new members can get overwhelmed by trying to wade through all of the information they receive.

Your strategy starts with the first contact you make with your new member, which typically includes a member card, information on member discounts and benefits, website log in, and suggestions for engaging in advocacy efforts associated with the organization.

You have a lot of information to get out to your new members, but remember, you don't have to tell the whole story at once. Give the new member enough information in your first contact to get started—log-in information to access their online benefits (if they apply). Next, get information from the member that can help you send them more targeted contacts later (interests, email address, etc.), and, most importantly, welcome them into the association and make them feel good about their decision to join.

Each subsequent contact should include more information on your benefits, with tips on how to get the most out of them, and opportunities for your members to get involved.

Use what's already working—a newsletter or your association magazine are perfect vehicles to push information out to your members. Create a new member version of your newsletter with an article that highlights a benefit, an online tool, a volunteer opportunity, or another way to get involved. Include a member page in each issue of your magazine—a place where members can go to read about new benefits and what their association is doing for them.

And don't forget to integrate. Make use of ALL communication vehicles, including online and telemarketing. Call the new member, send them a video from the president, or invite them to a new member event to welcome them to the association. If you have a robust website, send new members an email with a link to a tutorial or a webinar that will show them how to use the products that you offer. Include a new member section on your website, exclusive to first-year members -- a place where they can interact with other members, volunteer, or read why longtime members are glad they joined.

The first year of membership for ANY member in an association is the most important. If you are successful in building a solid relationship with the member, they are more likely to renew and become an active part of your association.

Lynn Waller is vice president of client services, at Adams Hussey & Associates. She has 11 years of direct marketing experience driving comprehensive direct response strategies for multi-million dollar budgets for a variety of clients, including large associations, nonprofits, and commercial accounts. Lynn oversees all her client programs from creative conception to analysis and reporting, relying on her core expertise of designing and executing fully integrated mail, direct mail, telemarketing and online advertising campaigns. Reach Lynn at lwaller@ahadirect.com., or 703-248-0025.

SISK

Sisk Fulfillment Service, Inc.
1900 Industrial Park Drive
Federalsburg, MD 21632
Phone 410.745.8141
Fax 410.754.8223
www.siskfulfillment.com



Subscription & Membership Premiums
Acknowledgement Program
Personalized Laser Printing
Product & Literature
Catalog Pick & Pack
Hand Work
Shrink Wrapping
File Processing & Presorts
Warehousing
Web Based Inventory
In-plant Loading
108,000 sq ft Facility

Sisk Mailing Service, Inc.
203 Log Canoe Circle
Stevensville, MD 21666
Phone 410.643.7900
Fax 410.643.7933
www.siskmail.com



Data Processing
Laser Personalization
Inkjet Personalization
Inserting
Bindery
Stamping
Metering
Labelaire
In-plant Loading
143,500 sq ft Facility