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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

NEW MEMBER RETENTION PLAN

Member retention is a key component of a good membership plan. To increase your membership, you have to recruit two new members for every member who doesn't renew. It takes a lot less work, and money, to retain your current members rather than continually trying to find new prospects to recruit.

Industry statistics show that the first year of membership is critical – the majority of those who do not renew their membership are first-year members. That is why it's so important to reach out to these new members, to give them personal attention, and to get them involved. A new member who participates in association activities and becomes part of the "community" is less likely to leave after a year.

Through personal attention, you can also educate the new member about association benefits and services. Many new members leave an association without even realizing what they're missing because no one took the time to personally explain how to take advantage of the benefits and how to find the most appropriate programs and activities for their needs. With a New Member Plan, you can ensure that all your new members learn how to maximize their membership and get involved in your association.

Application

Upon receipt of a prospective member's application, send a postcard, or call them, to let them know that you received their application and to explain what they can expect next in the enrollment process.

After acceptance of their membership:

The Membership Committee chair or member calls to welcome them.

Send them a "New Member Profile" form. Publish this profile information in your newsletter and on your Web site. Use photos if possible.

Week One

The EO/Membership Committee Member/Ambassador/Sponsoring Spike makes a welcome call and schedules a time for them to come into the office (or to go visit them) to offer an introduction to the association and talk about benefits and opportunities. The goal is to familiarize them with the staff and leadership, find out their expectations of membership, and encourage their involvement with a committee or another association activity. Give them information about the next New Member Orientation, and get their commitment to attend.

Week Two

Make a follow-up call if no contact was made the previous week.

Send them an e-mail with a link to your Web site, the state HBA's Web site, and NAHB's Web site, and instructions for logging in to the members' only section of each of the sites.

Month One

A member leader (Associates Council chair, Membership chair) calls to remind them about the next meeting and/or orientation. The member making the call should take notes about the new member and pass along any relevant feedback about the new member or new member process to staff and the Membership Committee. Send networking tips to associate members.

Month Two

If they haven't already joined a committee or expressed an interest in volunteering for an association event, send a letter encouraging their involvement and an official sign-up form.

A reminder is sent about the next meeting or educational event.

Send a quarterly e-mail or newsletter to first-year members to remind them about member benefits and services.

Each issue can focus on a segment of member services, for example, education, networking/meetings, and legislative/advocacy. Use testimonials and member profiles throughout this publication.

Month Four

A current member calls to check in with the new member – to find out if they have any questions, to review some of the benefits, and to remind them about an upcoming event. The member calling should have information on whether or not the new member has taken advantage of any benefits or attended any meetings or events. This is also an opportune time to thank the new member for their contributions to the association and their participation or attendance at an association event.

Month Six

Another call is made to the new member by a Membership Committee or Associates Council chair/member. Thank them for their membership and discuss their membership and participation. Find out if there is anything you can do for them. If there is a problem, you have six months to correct it and demonstrate just how important their membership is to you and to the association. Also invite them to an upcoming event. Require the caller to report back on any relevant feedback about the New Member Plan or comments from the new member.

Month Nine

The EO calls to see if they've taken advantage of the benefits they talked about during the individual orientation. A short letter, postcard, or e-mail with informational links can also serve as a reminder.

Month Ten

Notify their membership sponsor to let them know that the new member will be up for renewal soon, in case they'd like to place a call themselves to talk about their membership and encourage their renewal. Provide a benefit reminder to the sponsor.

Month Eleven

An anniversary letter is mailed with a request that they renew their membership. In addition to the invoice, send a "statement" detailing how the member benefited from their membership – either through their direct involvement or by taking advantage of a specific benefit. If the member did not get involved in association activities or did not access any member benefits, remind them about what they have missed – benefits, networking or exhibiting opportunities, education – and its potential value to the member.

One Year, Six Months

Staff or leadership calls the member to discuss their involvement, concerns, and needs. This is a chance to conduct an informal survey so you can learn how to improve your new member services.

Success!

Create a new member plan that your member leadership and staff can effectively put in place – at first you may not be able to stick to such an aggressive approach. Whatever you do, make sure you communicate regularly with your first-year members. New members will be more likely to take advantage of the benefits and services offered and the association's membership will continue to thrive through both new recruits and retained members.

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