Affiliate Tips

Ideas and Resources for Working with Young Members

11 Ways to Attract Younger Members – by Holly Duckworth

Key Points

Younger members enjoy being able to co-create experiences with the association. There is increasing evidence that young members often feel overwhelmed when they first join a professional association, as they are quickly met with stories of successful lifetime and Emeritus members. Take the time to learn why young members joined the association and create experiences that help meet their needs.

- *Example:* Ask young association members to lead a committee which reflects their interests. This allows younger members the opportunity to provide their input and utilize their leadership skills, while also adding new value to the association as a whole.

Offer sage advice and mentoring opportunities to young members. Try mentor matching between long-time members and your youngest members. One-on-one advice from the association’s older members is a valuable asset to younger members as they navigate this new experience. Always try to think back to what it felt like when you were the younger member and what you wish you would have known earlier!

- *Example:* Create a Facebook group where mentors and mentees can share experiences and discuss important topics within the association. In offering a more casual environment for conversation, topics of discussion tend to develop more organically between the parties involved.

Be casual and fun! Many of the association’s youngest members are feeling the struggle of work-life balance, regardless of if they are college students or young professionals with families. Offer some time for relaxation within your affiliate! Host an event where members can meet and mingle, without the commitment of any formal presentations of information. Invite your young members to bring their family or friends. This is a great way to show you care about these members and understand that their time is often extremely divided.

- *Example:* Due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines, host a virtual meet-and-greet event via Zoom! Invite members to involve their families, friends, or even their pets in the fun by hosting icebreaker games that allow members to get to know each other better.
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10 Association Communications Stats with Tips to Reach Younger Members More Effectively – by Gabrielle Wathen

Key Points

Information overload is a current problem for all association members, which is only further magnified when more than half of associations admit they have trouble engaging young professionals. Young professionals are searching for professional development opportunities, just like all association members, however, they tend to have e-mail inboxes that are overloaded with messages. The association’s younger members are more connected to digital technologies than ever before, which means they are receiving hundreds of messages a day and may lose your important content in the pile of information before them! Tap into tools that support the collection of comprehensive member data and utilize keywords that attract your younger members.

- **Example:** Provide customization options for members that allow them to sort information on your webpage or social media sites by their unique needs. Compartmentalize information into larger categories, which are then searchable, to allow for ease in locating content. Create e-mail subjects that attract the viewer’s attention, rather than being generic overviews of the content within. For instance, “10 Tips to Help You Land Your Dream Job!” is much more eye-catching than “Job Tips for Young Professionals.”

Association members understand the benefit of engagement. Members notice when you notice. What does that mean? If you have one member who is consistently engaging with your Facebook posts, give them a unique shout-out and thank them for their engagement! Take time to assess what type of content receives the most interaction from your members. For instance, your youngest members are more likely to enjoy Instagram and YouTube, while your older members likely prefer Facebook and e-mail updates. By knowing your audience, you can tailor your messages more effectively!

- **Example:** Test out your engagement on various social media sites. Post similar messages to each social media outlet, then set a time to measure statistics. Check how many members interacted with the post, including likes and comments, as well as if any shared the message with their followers. If you notice there were only two shares on Twitter but more than 50 likes on Facebook and Instagram, it may best serve your population to spend less time on Twitter and move to the platforms that are more engaging to your audience members.

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8 Ways Associations Can Attract and Engage Younger Members – by Rachel Clemens

Key Points

- Develop a proactive membership lifecycle for younger members. A membership lifecycle is the natural progression of movement through an association. It often begins with members being more passive, then moving into more active roles, which culminate in leadership positions, often within 10 – 15 years of joining. However, with the fragility in the current job market, young members see associations as a way to stay agile and advance in their careers. Your membership lifecycle should reflect this.

- **Example:** The AAFCS Leadership Academy! This opportunity is a fantastic way for young members to become involved with AAFCS early in their careers and grow within the association. By providing leadership training and opportunities for leadership development, young members feel more comfortable with taking on leadership roles earlier in their careers, which help them to remain in active roles within the association for longer periods of time.

- The association has current younger members, so make sure they have great stories to share with future members. Make it easy for your younger members to share stories of their success in the association by providing opportunities for awards and recognition. Provide professional development opportunities that have actionable outcomes, such as professional development units, and make that information easy to share with potential new members to the association. Your members are truly your best ambassadors.

- **Example:** Recognize one of your younger association members each month as a rising star in the profession! It takes just a few moments to type up a description of why a member is a leader in the profession and post an image to social media. It will mean the world to the recipient!

- In most associations, over half of new members will choose not to renew after the first two years. The first year of membership is key to helping to grow those bonds. Be sure to show your younger members the value of being a member of this association through actions, not just words.

- **Example:** Reach out to your younger members and ask if they would be willing to host a panel discussion at a state meeting. Select a topic they show interest and expertise in, then allow them to take the lead on developing the topic in greater detail. By co-creating experiences, you are showing the value of a membership in this association and helping to turn “young members” into lifelong members!

Clemens, R. (May 9, 2019). 8 Ways associations can attract and engage younger members. Mighty Citizen; https://www.mightycitizen.com/insights/articles/8-ways-associations-can-attract-and-engage-younger-members