Affiliate Tips

20 Ideas to Recruit and Retain Members

Part I. Visibility = Recruitment

1. Offer mentoring and sponsorship opportunities to new teachers and other FCS professionals.

2. Create affiliate-specific membership promotion videos.
   Have the board/officer team start with one minute or less video clips and invite others across the state to create short videos of why it’s beneficial to be a member for use on social media or sharing through state list-servs.

3. Organize a membership campaign such as Each One Reach One (Texas Affiliate 2019-20) with incentives for members who sign up new members. Recognition was a key element of the campaign, recognizing campaign participants who successfully recruited individuals to join AAFCS for the first time or renew lapsed memberships.

4. Develop service projects to engage membership and enhance affiliate visibility.
   Projects might be local or statewide need-based responses or focused on natural disasters:
   - Raise funds and/or collect items for local shelters and causes.
   - Sew/make items and deliver to local children’s hospitals, shelters, etc.
   - Have members and/or prospective members create quilt squares to be made into a quilt(s) for a specific cause.
   - Organize a charity walk/run for a cause.
   - Organize a community garden.
   - Prepare and serve food for a local cause.
   - Remodel a local nonprofit facility that works with individuals and/or families.

5. Offer incentives for joining AAFCS at annual affiliate meetings or conferences (drawing for a free AAFCS membership or discounted conference registration).

6. Host “FCS in Action Mondays” with webinars each Monday to feature members across your state who are innovators. Seeing professionals making a difference and attributing that to their AAFCS membership and involvement is great for recruiting members to join.

7. Hold a "Future FCS Teacher Dinner" every year during the state FCCLA Leadership Conference in the spring. A Family and Consumer Sciences teacher can bring two students from their high school who are juniors or seniors and want to major in FCS in college. Have higher education institutions in the state with the FCS teacher education programs give presentations.

8. Adopt local schools or otherwise serve as ambassadors to local schools to spread word of affiliate and profession.
   In this role/exercise, the affiliate can serve as a resource and subject matter experts on various topics for the school and local community.
Part II. Camaraderie

1. Organize a “State’s Night Out” during the in-person AAFCS annual conference. This organized effort allows the state affiliate members and those from your state who are at the conference but not members to get to know one another and build relationships.

2. Affiliate happy hours can help state affiliate members to get to know one another and build relationships. These events might rotate around/across state on quarterly basis to give more members/potential members opportunities to interact.

3. Host a “Friendraiser” using the message, bring a friend… share the affiliate. This “Friendraiser” could provide incentives to members that bring a non-member friend to a meeting. Incentives might include being entered into a drawing to win a gift card, or discounted registration/membership dues.

4. Create a retired FCS professional network. Contact retirees periodically to serve as judges for FCCLA events, mentors for new teachers/professionals, substitutes, and to support the recruitment of new teachers. When veteran professionals share their life experiences, it can be a great motivator to new professionals or non-members on the importance of being involved.

Part III. Professional Development

1. Offer continuing education opportunities that leverage emerging trends and current issues.

2. Offer professional development in different formats at times, locations, etc. that meet the needs of members.

3. Provide and promote opportunities for peer-reviewed scholarship to Secondary, Higher Education, and Extension faculty.

4. Identify and promote local and regional resources available to members for professional development functions including professionals with expertise, business sponsorships, etc.

5. Develop and implement a strategy for using electronic media (newsletters, social media, e-mails) to provide solutions to current issues facing individuals, families, and communities.

Part IV. Retention

Remember the value received (benefits) by members must exceed the perceived costs to maintain members.

1. Develop a new member onboarding plan that includes a personalized membership kit and card and early renewal reminders.

2. Develop and implement a retention (loyalty) program that includes:
   - thanking new members for joining,
   - follow-up communication to keep new members engaged,
   - survey or first year loyalty assessment (6-9 months after membership starts), and
   - rotating meetings around the state for increased visibility and to be responsive to travel challenges.

3. Conduct a biannual membership survey to:
   - find out what your members want and need in the context of their existing challenges and the solutions your affiliate can offer,
   - determine what your members value about being a member, and
   - what obstacles would keep them from renewing their membership.