Affiliate Tips

Why People Don’t Join or Renew Membership and What You Can Do About It

Overcoming Objections

In today’s market of a multitude of professional associations to which we can belong, sometimes it is difficult to grow membership in AAFCS. When asking individuals why they don’t join or renew their membership, here are some of the responses:

- **Dues are too expensive**
  - I don’t have time to take advantage of my membership
  - I already belong to another association that provides similar benefits
  - I receive all the education I need through another organization or my employer

- My employer will not (or will no longer) reimburse me for my membership dues
- I don’t see the value
- Someone else in my office is already a member
- I am retiring (or retired)

It is important to anticipate these objections, even raise them, and overcome any existing perceptions. Working these solutions into your communications can help you in recruiting members. The following are possible strategies to overcome these objections:

**Objection**

"Dues are too expensive"

**Strategy**

1. Explain the value (benefits) of membership: Professional Development Opportunities, Credentialing, Advocacy Resources, Networking, Publications, Awards, Fellowships/Scholarships, Research Grants (Use “Why Join AAFCS” in Membership Tool Kit)
2. Compare price of joining AAFCS to other methods of obtaining same benefits. Examples: Cost of paying for comparable webinars if not a member (free if member); Cost of research publications (Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences included with AAFCS membership); Registration fee as a nonmember of attending Annual Conference and Expo.
3. Break down dues and show how a yearly membership is “___ cents a day.”
4. For soon to be graduates of AAFCS Assembly of Higher Education Institutions, inform them of “first year free” opportunity offered by AAFCS.
Objection

"I don’t have time to take advantage of my membership (Not enough time to accomplish everything)"

Strategy

1. Acknowledge there isn’t enough time in the day to accomplish everything. (Show you can relate.) Reinforce the idea that AAFCS (and the Affiliate) understands that time is the most precious thing we have, want and need.
2. Illustrate (give specific examples, stories from members) how the resources of the Association can save them time.
   Example: By attending the Annual Conference and Expo a person can do all the following: present research (poster or oral presentation), gain the latest information in the field through professional development opportunities, meet professional development requirements from work, network with other professionals to identify guest speakers for events, identify others with common interest for possible future research, gain knowledge of new products (Expo).

Objection

"I already belong to another association that provides similar benefits"

Strategy

1. Identify the strengths of your organization (National and Affiliate) that make it unique. This may be through a survey of your members to find out what they consider your organization to be their primary or secondary source for areas such as education, professional development, information, networking, volunteering, advocacy, career advancement, or specific subject area content.
2. Compare AAFCS offerings, services to that of other “competing” organizations. Explain what AAFCS offers is unique to other organizations (such as certifications, webinars…).

Objection

"I receive all the education I need through another organization or my employer"

Strategy

Education is usually a core function of associations. Many industries and professions require a specific number of continuing education (CE) units in a specific time, whether for maintaining licenses or ensure keeping high standards.
1. Evaluate your current educational offerings (National, Affiliate) such as annual conferences, webinars. Can you differentiate your association’s opportunities as better, unique, bigger variety for generalists?
2. Identify when educational offerings provide more than just information. Example: Annual conferences provide education, presenting opportunities, networking.…
3. Recognize that, yes there are other organizations that provide educational opportunities. Ask a prospective member “Why choose our continuing education when you can obtain CE credits from their employer, a vendor, or another organization?” then tell them precisely why they should choose your organization’s offering. (above reasons)
**Objection**

_“My employer will not (or will no longer) reimburse me for my membership dues.”_

**Strategy**

Many members already pay their membership dues but for some whose company/organization pays for it, when this is cut, the issue is that they must see enough value in membership to pay for it themselves.

1. You need to ‘justify’ the cost of membership. Use information on benefits of membership.
2. Use the phrase “Membership Pays for Itself” and explain why (benefits of membership…)
3. Remember that this individual may need information to take to the employer to show importance of membership (whether for the employer to reconsider paying their dues or reinforcing the importance of being a part of AAFCS as an important association in your profession.

**Objection**

_“I don’t see the value.”_

**Strategy**

1. Be up front and honest about opportunities of AAFCS and affiliate.
2. Find out what the individual values. Is it networking, virtual professional development, presenting research… then provide a few key benefits salient to the individual.
3. Research (survey, interviews…) the challenges your target market faces that are unique to their job but common to the profession.
4. Match AAFCS’ benefits to these challenges.
5. Develop messages focused on their challenges and the things your association offers that will enhance their professional lives.
Objection

“Someone else in my office is already a member”

Strategy

The person using this objection most likely do not view membership as necessary to achieve personal goals. While they may believe in AAFCS and or FCS’s mission, they are content with their status as nonmember. They need to hear compelling reasons to join.

1. Determine key offerings of AAFCS and/or affiliate that will pique their interest.
2. Identify ‘exclusive’ and valuable benefits of AAFCS. What is unique and important?
3. Provide these examples along with testimonials or outcomes specific to each benefit. (Ask members to provide such testimonials or outcomes.)

Objection

“I am retiring (or retired)”

Strategy

1. Point out that AAFCS has a rate for retired professionals.
2. Explain how a retired individual can ‘pay it forward’ by being a mentor for the AAFCS Leadership Academy or Student Unit or other new members.
3. Point out that an individual with many years in the professional experience can provide valuable expertise on association committees, communities, task forces, evaluators….
4. Explain the value of professional development and networking with other professionals in the field as a positive contribution to staying connected to an individual’s life passion.