

# Member Retention

## Why Is Member Retention Important?

It takes a lot more effort and expense to retain a current member than to recruit a new one. The Piano Technicians Guild is fortunate to have a large body of members who have been part of the association for 10 or more years. This is above the average for most associations. But, we do lose a couple of hundred people each year and that is a loss of talent and experience. Member loss may also be a sign that the local or international organization is not meeting member needs with relevant, timely opportunities for development and networking. While every organization needs a steady infusion of new ideas and young energy, the contributions of mature, experienced members are felt all throughout the organization and especially at leadership and educational levels. Listen to, and treasure, your current members.

## Tips for Member Retention

- 1. Monitor attendance.** Not only how many are coming, but also who are the regular attendees. What types of activities get your members out in force? What locations draw the best crowd? Are there members of your group who have never attended a meeting since initially joining PTG? Track attendance for 6-12 months or at least half a dozen meetings.
- 2. Survey your members.** Make it simple. Try a phone or email survey. Find out what times and locations are best. Be open-minded to change or variety. You can't please everyone all the time, but there may be some real barriers you can accommodate. Ask what type of activities people want, too. Don't expect very many to reply to a general request for ideas in your newsletter. Few of us remember to respond. Pay attention to the feedback you receive and respond to it. Let people know what the survey results were and what will happen next.
- 3. Meet frequently.** The old saying "out of sight, out of mind" really is true. Get together as often as you can--don't forget social events--to remind people why they joined and the benefits of networking.
- 4. Communicate frequently.** Whether through the traditional newsletter format or electronically, keep the information flowing. Pass along training opportunities, member news, service tips, new technology, marketing ideas as often as possible. Get email addresses and send out short messages. Not everyone comes to every meeting. Be sure, though, that everyone has the same opportunity to get information. Put together a calling tree for the purpose of getting information out quickly or sending out a quick meeting reminder. People are more likely to attend a meeting when they get a personal invitation.
- 5. Plan your meetings well.** People come to learn, share information, see old friends and appreciate common experiences in the field. Keep the business part to a minimum, Facilitate discussion efficiently by being professional and directed towards specific action. Get started on time and stick with the time line. Choose programs that are interesting. Make sure the instructor is an effective presenter. Plan a variety of topics. Technical presentations should include information for every level and interest.
- 6. Get everyone involved.** We have a bigger stake in an organization when we contribute personally to its well-being. With today's busy schedules, everyone seems to prefer short-term volunteer assignments. People are more likely to say yes to a single event or project with a shorter time line. Divide up the work into smaller tasks and spread it out. This is how new leadership is developed and it takes the strain off the few who usually feel they are stuck with all the work.. Be prepared to have things done a little differently than how you would have done them. Don't forget to thank people for their help.