

The Palm Beach County chapter has grown to a membership of eighty-four members. Much of the chapter's success in attracting and retaining members is due to the excellent work of the membership, programming, and communications committees in addition to the chapter board. National Office has provided supporting materials and offered special promotions throughout the year to encourage membership recruitment.

The chapter membership committee is proposing a more ambitious membership development plan to attract and retain chapter members. By strategically approaching chapter membership development, the committee seeks to increase the number of chapter members and enhance the overall quality of membership for current chapter members. The theme of this plan depicts the goal of increasing chapter membership by a little more than 10% this year.

Implementing some aspects of this plan may call for more participation by the chapter board and/or increasing the size of the chapter's membership committee to better reflect target potential member audiences. While it may not be possible to carry out all the plan's objectives in the first year, this document can be used as a benchmark and guide for future chapter membership committees. Following is a summary of the plan's objectives:

Membership Recruitment

- Objective #1 To develop a comprehensive list of prospective members in Palm Beach County

- Objective #2 To develop a calendar of membership development campaigns and opportunities for the year in conjunction with chapter local activities such as professional development day and national members' promotions

- Objective #3 To maximize membership recruitment opportunities through nonmember attendance at the monthly luncheons

- Objective #4 To reach and involve north county potential members

Membership Retention

- Objective #1 To explore ongoing ways to communicate with current chapter members throughout the year so that the monthly meeting notice is not their only contact

- Objective #2 To explore vehicles for involvement, other than the monthly luncheons, by which current members can participate and/or provide input – including leadership development opportunities

- Objective #3 To determine chapter membership makeup by sector so that programming, services, and outreach can be targeted accordingly

- Objective #4 To contact new members periodically in their first year of membership to ensure membership renewal

Membership Recruitment

- Objective #1** **To develop a comprehensive list of prospective members in Palm Beach County**
- Discussion: The list of potential chapter members includes the list of prospects provided by national, which is a list of national members who are not chapter members, and a running list of names of those who ask to be put on the chapter mailing list for monthly meeting notices. There are many more individuals in Palm Beach County, holding various titles, who would qualify for membership. In order to know how successful we are in obtaining market penetration, the chapter has to define its universe of potential members.
- Tactic: Employ the assistance of all chapter members to provide names and sources of names of those who would qualify but who are not currently chapter members.
- Tactic: Obtain membership lists of allied organizations.
- Tactic: Look to other sources such as lists provided by local Chambers of Commerce and the Palm Beach County Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Tactic: Develop an EXCEL spreadsheet with the names, titles, and companies of potential members including acquisition codes to determine how they first encountered the chapter.

Membership Recruitment (continued)

Objective #2 **To develop a calendar of membership development campaigns and opportunities for the year in conjunction with chapter local activities such as professional development day and national members' promotions**

Discussion: To proactively promote chapter membership, a calendar of membership development initiatives should be developed for the year. Chapter membership development activities can then be incorporated into all aspects of chapter programming, communications, and special events.

Tactic: Obtain information on all national campaigns and local chapter events.

Tactic: Assemble promotional material and plan communications strategies in conjunction with national and local opportunities.

Membership Recruitment (continued)

- Objective #3** **To maximize membership recruitment opportunities through nonmember attendance at the monthly luncheons**
- Discussion: Nonmembers attending chapter monthly luncheons are hot member prospects. A more systematic approach to contacting them before, during, and after the luncheons should be developed.
- Tactic: Determine nonmember status prior to luncheon. Send board members a list of nonmembers attending so that a concerted effort can be made by all board members to make contact during the luncheon.
- Tactic: Make a packet of membership information available to nonmembers at the monthly luncheons, which would include information on the local chapter
- Tactic: Plan repeated follow-ups with nonmembers including a call within 48 hours following the luncheon and a call prior to the following luncheon should they not be registered to attend.

Membership Recruitment (continued)

Objective #4

To reach and involve north county potential members

Discussion:

There is a growing number of north county members and potential members who are unable to make the monthly luncheon meetings because the meeting location is simply not convenient. Ways to encourage participation by having at least one event a year in the northern part of the county might encourage new memberships and membership renewals.

Tactic:

Hold an evening social event in the summer that can be easily coordinated and heavily promoted to members and nonmember alike. Heavily target potential members by encouraging each chapter member to bring along a prospective member.

Tactic:

Consider holding a twice-a-year brown bag lunch or quarterly morning coffee in the north county and target potential members by segment.

Membership Retention

- Objective #1 To explore ongoing ways to communicate with current chapter members throughout the year so that the monthly meeting notice is not their only contact
- Discussion: Current members need to know that membership in the local chapter is not just about attending the monthly luncheons. Members need to know that their input is needed on a regular basis and that their chapter membership is relevant beyond the ability to attend monthly luncheons.
- Tactic: Consider sending a monthly or quarterly chapter e-newsletter to the membership. This communication, which could be a joint effort between the membership committee and the communications committee, would keep members current on local news affecting the profession, local events of interest, and member news. There could also be regular columns by the chapter president and/or a senior practitioner.
- Tactic: Consider sending a brief twice-a-year survey polling members on their needs and interests.
- Tactic: Call every single chapter member each year to check in on what they are doing, thinking, and need from the local chapter. Might be a good way to recruit people for involvement on chapter committees and/or leadership.

Membership Retention (continued)

- Objective #2** **To explore vehicles for involvement, other than the monthly luncheons, by which current members can participate and/or provide input – including leadership development opportunities**
- Discussion: The chapter has relied on the monthly luncheons and professional development day as the main ways for chapter members to stay involved. Other means of involving chapter members should be explored to meet the changing needs and schedules of chapter members.
- Tactic: Contact/survey chapter members to determine meeting formats/topics of interest.
- Tactic: Hold one-time events to determine level of interest including a morning coffee, special interest group brown bag lunch, or evening social function.

Membership Retention (continued)

- Objective #3** **To determine chapter membership makeup by sector so that programming, services, and outreach can be targeted accordingly**
- Discussion: Professionals are going to be most interested in networking and taking time out of their workday if the topic or activity will positively impact their performance at work and/or their career. The makeup of chapter members by sector has been measured in past surveys and should be taken into consideration when planning chapter programming and events.
- Tactic: Revisit the list of chapter members to determine industry sectors represented. Consider a targeted phone campaign to each industry sector member to determine topics and events that would be of interest.

Membership Retention (continued)

Objective #4

To contact new members periodically in their first year of membership to ensure membership renewal

Discussion:

Studies have shown that if a member decides to renew their membership within the first year, they are more likely to renew their membership in future years. A concerted effort should be made to have repeated contact and involvement with first year members.

Tactic:

Assign membership committee members new members with whom they can call and email throughout the year. Special attention should be taken to determine topics of interest and opportunities for participation.