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**MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

“Membership experience” is a way of defining how your members will see, use, and interact with your organization. The importance of a valuable member experience cannot be overstated; the experience you offer to members will shape their view of your organization, and it is the main factor that drives member retention. If you want your members to keep coming back to you, then you need to engage with them continually--not just when you reach out once a year with their renewal invoice.

**MEMBER PERSONAS**

To begin building the ideal membership experience, start by generating “member personas” --hypothetical conceptions of the different kinds of members that might be attracted to your organization. For each member persona you generate, consider:

* Who are they?
* How did they find your organization?
* What attracted them to become members?
* What interests do they have that relate to your organization?
* What benefits could you offer that this member would find particularly valuable?

This is a valuable exercise to get you thinking about your organization from the perspective of a member. No matter how much your members care about the mission of your organization, their first priority is always going to be the value that they receive in exchange for their membership investment. And since not all members are the same, your organization needs to provide value in a variety of ways.

Some members may simply want to attend one event a year, network a little bit and get their continuing education credits; as long as you provide them the opportunity to do so, they will be happy. Others are looking for programs and services tailored more specifically to them--mentoring programs, leads groups, small member circles, etc. Some are looking for an ambassador or leadership role. Others just want an opportunity to engage in a dialogue related to their industry. It is possible to tailor your membership experience to service all of these different desires, and even segment your communications so that specific members are receiving targeted communications based on their personal goals for membership. But this will only be successful if you have properly assessed your members and you really understand what they want.