



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
LEGAL NURSE CONSULTANTS

American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants

Membership Development Strategies: Best Practices

The following document is a compilation of membership growth initiatives that association chapters have successfully used to expand their membership base. It is important to note that each chapter's strategy will be as unique as the chapter itself - it is essential that growth initiatives are planned to meet the specific goals of each individual chapter.

Chapter Board Structure

For several chapters effective strategies begin with the make up of their leadership. By selecting a board member whose sole responsibility is focusing on growth, chapters ensure that someone is actively monitoring new member initiatives as well as raising membership issues at each stage of program planning.

To address the time constraints of their members, chapters have created membership committees. This allows for the work to be shared among several members as well as expands the network of resources devoted to membership initiatives.

Focus Membership Efforts

As with all volunteer-driven initiatives, it is essential that growth strategies are as efficient as possible. Establishing goals for growth will help chapters monitor the progress of their efforts. By identifying targets for membership, chapters can tailor their efforts to ensure they are reaching out to the appropriate prospects - ones who will benefit and contribute to the chapter. Approaching membership activities strategically will help chapters avoid the "shotgun" approach to recruiting.

Program Planning

The most valuable benefit of membership, according to members, is also the most effective recruiting tool. By planning programs to meet the needs of their diverse membership, chapters also create an attractive program for prospects. Further, the more diverse the chapter programs, the bigger the pool of prospective new members. For example: many chapters have found that planning meetings open to all membership, as well as board-only roundtables, has allowed them to cater to both their general and management level members.

Creative Alliances

Forming relationships with other groups or businesses can be an effective way to increase AALNC's visibility. Several chapters have created alliances with trade shows that allow reduced registration fees for AALNC members, as well as the opportunity to promote AALNC to other attendees. Chapters have also allowed businesses to co-sponsor events as a way to offset the costs of the event.



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Utilizing Existing Networks

By utilizing the networks of its members, chapters have found they can increase the pool of prospective members. Again, involving more people in the recruitment process will allow for the work to be shared.

Since current members will provide the most credible endorsement of AALNC, asking members to reach out to prospects is often the most effective way to identify and contact potential members.

Contacting Members

As with planning a growth initiative, chapters should be strategic when implementing one. Rather than cold calling targets, chapters should attempt to ask any member who may have a relationship with the prospective member to make the contact. If there is no one with this type of relationship, chapters should ask a member with a similar background to initiate contact. This will naturally tailor the introduction to AALNC to the prospect's background and needs.

Follow Up

After the initial introduction, chapters find it important to follow up with the prospective member. While this follow up could be simply a call to answer further questions, it is more often an invitation to attend an upcoming meeting or event.

Similar to making the initial contact, chapters commonly pair visitors with current members. This "buddy system" approach will help the guest feel more comfortable and will highlight specific benefits they can expect to receive from membership.

Finally, continuing the communication process is essential. Checking in with guests after a visit to a chapter meeting or event provides the opportunity for the guest to ask follow up questions. The member who was paired with the visitor at the meeting would be the best person to make this follow up.

Common Obstacles

There are several common challenges that chapters frequently encounter when executing a membership development strategy. The most common of these hurdles is time, both the amount current members have to devote to membership development, as well as the time prospective members are able to devote to participating in AALNC events.

Many solutions have been offered to minimize the impact of these challenges, from scheduling meetings at different times, to involving several members in the process. Whatever the solution, chapters stress that acknowledging these challenges when developing a strategy allows them to remain proactive, thus avoiding the inefficiency of being caught off guard.



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Conclusion

The tactics described above are a compilation of successful techniques employed by AALNC Chapters when planning and implementing growth initiatives. While this is not intended to represent a comprehensive membership development strategy, it will provide a starting point for chapters wishing to adopt a more assertive approach to expanding their membership. Chapters are encouraged to build upon the foundation created in this document, and submit supplemental tactics to be added to this document.

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