

IDEAS ON INCREASING MEMBERSHIP

From the 2012-2013 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

During a difficult economy, more working moms, moms with younger children still at home, it seems we are all struggling with growing in membership and the retention of our members. The following ideas/suggestions were presented and discussed at the 2012-2013 Membership Committee's Meeting. We have put together a few ideas or suggestions we feel could be beneficial to Aggie Mom Clubs.

Some of the information was obtained from the internet for non-profit organizations and some are ideas from all of us. We hope you will take the time to read over what we have for you and hopefully, it will benefit your club in some way.

The following material came from the internet, but we feel these ideas on membership stood out and could apply to Aggie Moms:

- Responsiveness to members is critical. We need to make sure our program fills a unique need and evolves with the needs of our members. Try to have speakers who are not recycling material members may have heard recently or elsewhere—they need to be fresh. Provide opportunities for members to bring guests—could be an Aggie Aunt, Grandmother, etc.—new Associate Member!?
- What value or benefit are we providing to our members? We are a nonprofit organization relying on our revenue through membership growth, so we need to look at what our goals are as an organization beyond just saying we want to increase membership. We need to evaluate what we currently offer to our members. Also, listen to your members. If there is an overwhelming request for something from your existing membership, you can bet that any potential new members are looking for those same things. Address the needs of your existing members.

Committee Ideas:

- Survey your members asking:
 - What do you want from Aggie Moms?
 - Why don't you come to the meeting?
 - What would entice you to come to a meeting?
- Review your Bylaws as to who can be a member, friends, relatives, affiliates, associate members, former students? You may need to make a change to be more specific.
- Make your meetings **FUN!** Not just a meeting and a speaker—more moms are in meetings during the day while at work and would like something light and fun! Try Bingo, “Who can wear the most Aggie pins, buttons, jewelry, etc.” night and have a prize; craft night; recipe night; etc. Go to “Openers” on internet and find games to adapt to Aggie Moms.
- Aggie Mom “greeters” at meetings
- Officers walking around and visiting/meeting with everyone
- Always—Aggie Mom Brags and offer if anyone has a concern to ask or talk about
- Small group connectors within the club: Bunco, Book Club, Quilting, Sewing, Art, Hiking, etc.

10 Tips to Increase Membership (from Internet)

Every club should have a good mix of membership strategies for retention and to increase growth. The start of a new year is a good time to evaluate your membership plan.

1. Exude a warm and welcoming attitude

A warm and welcoming Executive Board can translate into a warm and welcoming club. Your Officers need to take a pro-active approach in meeting and greeting potentially new members. The president, in fact, should stand at the door, and shake the hand of members and guests as they come in for your monthly meeting. It can be hard for people to walk into a roomful of people they don't know. Introduce yourself, take an interest in them, and introduce them to other members.

2. Make everything you do a "media event"

Now that digital cameras are so easy to use, take a picture at all your events - your keynote speaker at the monthly meeting, your new member inductions, - and send it to your local newspapers. Newspapers, especially weeklies, are always looking for items of local interest. Post on website or Facebook!

3. Want to get the media more interested in what you're doing?

Invite a local journalist to speak at your meeting. When the club invited the assistant managing editor of the local newspaper, she not only spoke about her life in the media but also gave us tips for ways to get better media coverage. She also took the business cards of everyone there, and wrote profiles of several business owning members.

4. Get to know your members

Make sure your Executive Board, including the Membership Secretary and her committee, makes a special effort to get to know each member by name. This can be a challenge, as your group grows, but it is essential. A member needs to feel that he or she is a valued part of the club, regardless of how much service or volunteer hours are contributed.

5. Set up a club website if you don't already have one

People increasingly expect an organization to have a website. Online search has become the most common and easiest way to research an organization for more information. You want to ensure that you are not missing out on valuable exposure online. Setting up a club website is also a valuable resource to your members, who need to find timely club information quickly and easily. A web based system such as Club Runner makes it easy for your club to have a professional website in addition to communication tools, and is very affordable for non-profits. [You can also contact the Federation Electronic Chair for information.](#)

6. Facebook! (This idea not from Internet!) Have a designated member/ officer to post your club's activities and news. It seems all are on Facebook now!

7. Get new members involved on committees and special projects

Ensure that members are aware of what your committees are, and encourage them to get involved. A wide variety of skills (everyone can cut and paste!) and talents are needed to run a successful club, and everyone's contribution is needed. Use your club website to feature all the committees and what they do.

8. Have a membership contest!

Any member who brings in a new member during the year has their name put into a hat. The drawing is held in April, and the winner gets their membership dues for the coming year reduced by half! There can be various takes on this – maybe the member who brings in the most members during the year gets a free membership the following year. The key issue is that your membership grows as a result of a collaborative effort.

9. Challenge every member to bring a friend to at least one meeting per month

Ask one guest to provide a short comment toward the end of the meeting about what they thought about the meeting. This will give you a good indication whether they are a potential member. Sometimes they'll convince themselves to join right in the middle of their comments! Just make sure to tell the guest at the beginning of the meeting that these comments will be requested at the end so the guest is not caught off-guard.

10. Make use of other organizations in your community to "spread the word" about your club

Service clubs, networking organizations, and professional associations are always looking for speakers. Most municipal councils are open to presentations by local non-profit organizations. Economic development organizations often organize conferences and one-day seminars where you might have an opportunity to speak to others about your organization. They can be a source for your club's need for a speaker—florist, painting, etc.

Any questions or concerns: sljohnson47@att.net, Chair Membership Committee

