

3 Communication Shifts You Should Consider for Your New Member Engagement Planning



The new member engagement of today looks pretty different from the new member engagement of yesterday. Gone are the traditional in-person welcome events in and one-on-one coffee dates to connect with new association chapter members and answer any urgent questions.



Since you're missing out on that chance to gauge your new association chapter members' immediate needs, how can you be sure you're starting off together in a way that will make them want to stay involved in your association chapter?

Many chapters are adding new member onboarding communications like emails and phone calls to their new member engagement plans. But how you convey that same warm, friendly in-person welcome when you can't be together can be tricky and varies by whomever is making the call or sending the email.

Here are three tactics to keep in mind for stronger new member emails and phone interactions.

Strategically plan your tone. It's great to have people willing to write new member emails and make those welcome phone calls; getting association chapter volunteers can be hard. But are they delivering the right content and in the structure that will do what you need it to do and show your



new association chapter members that joining was the right decision? Review any welcome emails and any phone scripts your volunteers are using. There's a good chance you'll see significant variations in tone. It's a good bet that some of those new member association chapter emails are stuffy and institutional; some are fun and friendly; others are welcoming, and yet others have a very dry, boring tone. How do you want your new association chapter members to feel after they read an email or get a phone call from your chapter? Establishing the right tone in each interaction helps better engage new members in their first few weeks of membership. And to help those people who are graciously reaching to these new members, give them the tools to do it right. Write scripts, provide talking points and summarize details like the tone you want them to use to communicate your message.

Answer questions ASAP, whether asked or not. Most likely, unless it's a job requirement, people join your association chapter for a few specific reasons. What do you know about why existing members joined that can help new members? What problems have you solved for existing members? Send an end-of-year association chapter membership survey, to gather that information. And use those first few new member association chapter emails and calls to share the top things you've done for your members. Some of those things you provide could include:

- Links to your association chapter's job board
- Connection to one of your association chapter special interest groups
- Curated networking like an introduction to a member who's doing similar work or the type of work the new member wants to do.

And don't blast the same communications to each new of your new association chapter members. Segment them so new members feel special when they get exactly what they need.

Take advantage of COVID. That sound terrible, we know. But the restrictions association chapters and their members have had to deal with as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have made your members' needs more difficult but at the same time more universal. How are your existing members feeling? How have the restrictions of the pandemic affected them, their industry and their jobs? Provide relevant information, training, and community opportunities to your new members (and your existing members if you haven't already!). Give them:

- **Information**, like the results of a survey that show how others in the chapter, your industry, etc., are handling COVID-19, or a link to a newsletter with guidance for working in your industry during the pandemic.
- **Training**, like links to your online education hub, recordings of previous trainings your association chapter held and your calendar of upcoming live and recorded online trainings.



- **Community**, like mental health and stress reduction support and ideas and the date of your next online networking event.

It's up to you to provide consistent, relevant, and timely information, to ensure your new association chapter members get what they need right away. Doing this will allow them to better engage with your association chapter from the start and show other potential association members all the value your association chapter provides right after a new member joins.

