

Chapters Should Take The Lead In Membership Renewal Marketing



Membership renewals are critical to an association chapter's health, across all aspects of the chapter: financial, engagement and ongoing member satisfaction. Many chapters have an effective process for managing these renewals. They know what they need to do and have a solid plan for getting it done.



However, some chapters, more often those that are part of a national organization, assume that the parent organization will take care of managing their membership renewals. And that they don't need to do more than send out an occasional reminder.

We're here to tell you it isn't a great idea to completely leave the process to your parent organization. Chapters can't assume that their parent organization will manage the entire process and do the local job that the chapter, and members, need. For the strongest chance of success, the process should be shared between the national organization and each of its chapters.

Why chapter involvement matters

There are more than a few good reasons a local chapter needs to take responsibility for its membership renewal program.

Personal, local relationships. Members typically feel more connected to their local chapter leaders than they do to the national office; they may never have had any interaction with the parent



organization outside of completing their membership paperwork. That personal touch—an email, call or in-person reminder from someone they know locally—can be the critical difference between a member renewing and walking away.

Local value reinforcement. When chapters manage their own renewals, they can better highlight the tangible local benefits of membership; they most likely have benefited from them personally. This can include networking, educational programs and events, workshops, community service, advocacy, etc. It is important to note that this concept of reinforcing how members benefit from your chapter complements shouldn't replace any messaging from your national organization about overall industry or professional benefits.

Consistent, coordinated messaging. When chapters and the parent organization align their renewal messaging, they are strengthening the overall brand unity and reinforcing the value of both the chapter and parent organization. The parent organization could, for example, provide much of the high-level material the local chapter needs, like core messaging, timing of the national renewal program, graphics and branding guidelines and templates and incorporate space for the chapter to provide local examples of things like benefits and events. Members get a consistent message about value, as well as critical local details that make the renewal request relevant to them. Chapters can also save time by not having to worry about creating everything they need to accomplish.

Data & insight sharing. Chapters can identify at-risk members early by tracking local member engagement, like knowing the core group of 10 who attend your monthly meetings. Once you understand who isn't showing up and why, you can use what you learn to better target renewals, through actions like one-on-one conversations and messaging focused on an individual or specific groups. And you could even learn something that allows you to expand chapter benefits. Providing this information to your national organization can also help them improve communication, benefits, and incentives across the entire organization.

How chapters can strengthen their membership renewal efforts

Once chapters understand the need to manage their own member renewal process, there are some things they can do to make the process run more smoothly.

- **Develop a committee.** Pull together a committee to manage and execute the renewal process, instead of relying on a single person or an ad hoc group to get it all done.



- **Create a plan.** Document and share when you will start contacting members about renewing and how you will do it. And who will be responsible for the different tasks.
- **Coordinate with the national team.** To align messaging and timing and learn from each other, work with the parent organization's renewal team.
- **Give chapter-level renewal reminders.** Send specific, engaging emails, have newsletter blurbs, and make meeting announcements that include renewal reminders and ideas of what members could be missing out on if they don't renew. For those using StarChapter, the platform can automate some of these tasks based on expiration dates.
- **Share stories or testimonials.** People engage when they learn from people they know. Use video and electronic methods like email, newsletters and social media, and take time at meetings to have some of your engaged, long-time members share why and how they stay involved.

The connection between national and chapter success

Membership renewal should be a shared mission between chapters and their national organization, with chapter leaders at the front line. When the local chapter drives the renewal program, members see the chapter first, not the national organization, giving the chapter the visibility and connection they need for a stronger chance of renewal.

The best way to be successful is through a partnership that delivers benefits to both the parent organization and the local chapter:

- **National** retains dues and stability.
- **Chapters** keep local engagement and leadership pipelines strong.
- **Members** continue receiving both national and local value.

Platforms like StarChapter can help chapters automate reminders, update websites with renewal messages and communicate with members effectively. Log in to your StarChapter dashboard to start your renewal communication campaign today.

