

Removing Roadblocks to Member Renewals



More than half of Associations say their biggest challenge is recruiting and retaining members. If you've got a lackluster renewal rate, maybe your renewal process is part of the problem.



GrowthZone

smarter **association** software

www.growthzone.com

Here are three key steps to overcoming renewal roadblocks:

58% of Associations report a **decrease** or **no growth** in membership size.

Source: GrowthZone
2017 Association Survey Results



Step 1: Set a goal with a deadline

Whether it's a percentage, a monetary amount, or something else, a specific goal with a deadline will help you stick to your plan and track your progress.

PRO TIP *Gathering data on how long it typically takes your members to renew is a great starting point.*

“A goal without a timeline is just a dream.”

~unknown

Membership renewals are key to success.

Did you know it costs 7x more to get a new member than to keep a current one?

Source: GrowthZone.com

Determine why members don't renew

Step 2:



Take time to research why your members don't renew and, just as importantly, why they DO renew. Hopefully, you can gain some insight from your last membership survey. If you're not sure, just ask them.

PRO TIP

Let's say you're a service provider, such as a lawn care company. If a customer decided not to use your service anymore, you'd ask them why, right? It's no different for Associations. If members are not renewing, determine the issue and address it.

Step 3:

Simplify the renewal process

Put yourself in your members' shoes, and view your renewal process from their perspective. Can it be simplified?

PRO TIP

Audit every step of your renewal process, including messaging, design, and timing of communications. Refine anything that isn't easy to understand and pleasing to the eye.

Top 5 Reasons Members Don't Renew:

BUDGET CUTS

1.



LACK OF VALUE Little or no return on investment

2.



LACK OF ENGAGEMENT/ INTEREST

3.



NO TIME TO PARTICIPATE

4.



COST

5.



58% of organizations reported a decrease or no growth in membership. Over the long term, be proactive in finding out what your members think. An annual survey is a good way to do this.

The Marketing of Renewals



The membership renewal process should be treated as a marketing campaign because it needs to be more strategic than simply sending an email or mailing an invoice.

It's also important to use multiple communication channels to encourage renewals. Emails, social media, phone calls, and letters (even faxes if it comes down to it) should be used. Of all these tactics, email is one of the most effective methods.

Top Method to Get Members to Renew:

68%

Email



Source: GrowthZone 2017 Chamber Survey Results

PRO TIP Structure your renewal process as a drip campaign where you send information to prospects and customers repeatedly over longer periods of time via multiple communication channels.

Email

There are a number of benefits to sending renewal notices by email:

- Low cost
- Environmentally friendly
- Members can quickly pay online



Make your emails work harder Here's how:

- Pre-determine the frequency of the emails (to avoid sending them too close together and to stay on target with your goal).
- Make sure the "From" is an actual person (e.g. Amy from GV Association).
- Keep the subject line to the point and under 55 characters, so it's more likely to be read.
- Optimize your format to be mobile-friendly.
- Check your email spam and bounce-backs; a member that doesn't receive the email likely won't renew.
- Avoid including too many images that take a long time to load or distract from your renewal message.

55%

of all emails
are opened on
mobile devices



Source: Superoffice.com

PRO TIP

The day of the week and time of day you send your renewal emails can impact your open rates.

Consider your members and think about when they would be most available to act on your email.

The Renewal Message

Be sure to keep your message simple and ask for what you want.

Here's a simple formula for crafting an effective message:

- Make it personal (never "Dear Member" – yikes!).
- Acknowledge how long they've been a member as well as any contribution they've made (e.g. volunteerism, monetary).
- Demonstrate what your organization has done for them as a member (e.g. education, advocacy, networking opportunities). Quick statistics and short bullet points are great for this; long paragraphs should be avoided.
- Include an obvious call to action (e.g. "Renew Now. Here's how:").
- Share the name and direct extension of the membership director.
- Provide a direct link with the option to easily pay online whenever possible.
- Give them the option to renew by phone.
- Include a postage-paid business reply envelope when sending renewal solicitations by mail to further simplify the process.
- List their current membership level with the option to upgrade (if you have a variety of membership levels). If they really want to downgrade, make them work for it.
- Ask for an additional contribution, but make it obvious that it's an optional contribution; members resent having it "snuck in" their renewal total.
- Add a P.S. at the end to communicate something important – it's always a great eye catcher when people scan text.
- Process all renewal payments before sending out round two to avoid confusion.
- Avoid duplicate renewal letters. Vary the message based on the number of times you've contacted them.



**PRO
TIP**

In your P.S., ask them to respond along with the name of a potential member.

**20
SEC**

The average recipient spends 20 seconds scanning an email. Make your message count by keeping it simple.

Incent Them to Renew Quickly

Speed up the process with an incentive to renew early, such as:

- Discounts on early, multi-year, or auto-renewal
- A voucher for a future event
- A gift (but keep in mind it can get expensive)

PRO TIP Offer a membership renewal option on your annual conference registration. What have you got to lose?

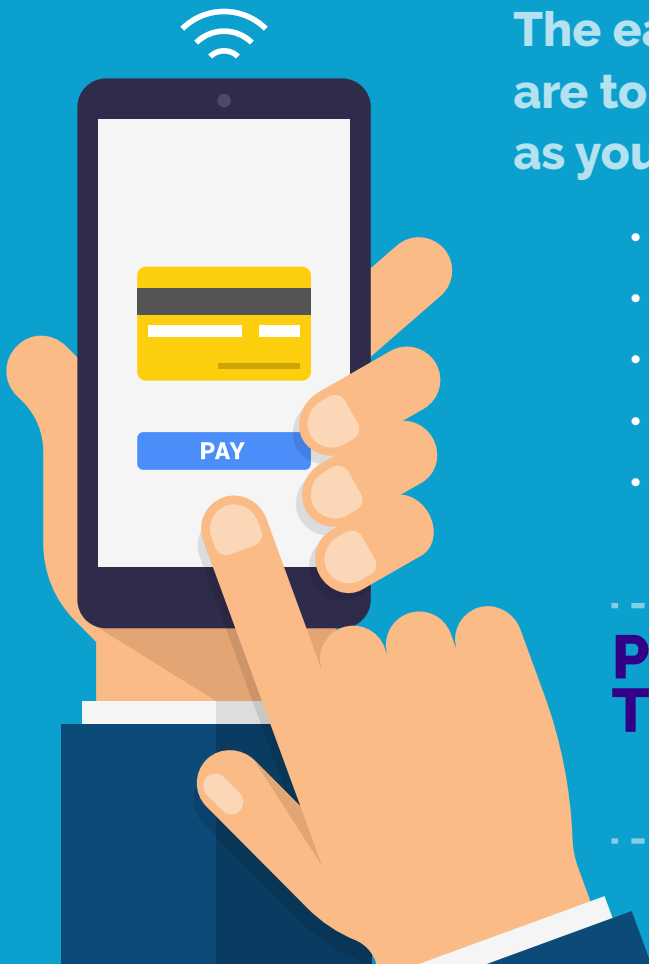


Provide Easy Payment Options

The easier it is to pay, the more likely they are to renew. Offer as many payment types as you have available.

- Online payment
- Installments
- Auto-renewal
- Option to pay by phone
- Business reply envelope

PRO TIP Statistics show that providing multiple payment options can lead to an increased conversion rate. People like options and control in any situation, so the more choices, the better.



Gone But Not Forgotten

If you're struggling to receive renewal payments by the end of your grace period, find out why. If you have a small organization, take the time to ask. Large organization? Send out a survey or ask via email.

PRO TIP *Proactively improve retention and renewal by using a New Member Onboarding Schedule to improve engagement and increase the odds of a long-term membership.*



The majority of Associations provide a **2-3 month grace period** for non-renewals.



Growing your Association is challenging. It's even more challenging if you're not retaining the members you already have. Removing roadblocks to renewals is the best place to start.

GrowthZone is the all-in-one association management software that delivers results.



GrowthZone

smarter **association** software



1.800.825.9171



www.growthzone.com



sales@growthzone.com