

FROM

INTROVERTS

TO

EXTROVERTS

Keeping All of Your Members Engaged



INTROVERT



EXTROVERT



GrowthZone
smarter association software

Most membership groups have a variety of personalities within the group. On average, about 30 percent of members in a professional organization are introverts, 40 percent are strong extroverts (sometimes spelled “extraverts”), and the remaining 30 percent fall somewhere in between the two. Providing an atmosphere that welcomes all personality types is not only critical for growth, but also helpful in increasing member engagement among all members.

When it comes to introverts, it’s important to understand that while many of them have the professionalism to converse in large group settings, they are often uncomfortable beneath their professional exterior. They frequently appear to be less engaged than their extroverted counterparts; however, it is likely that their interest and engagement are simply more subtle.

As Jill D. Burruss and Lisa Kaenzig wrote in an article titled *Introversion: the Often Forgotten Factor Impacting the Gifted*, “There is nothing wrong with being an introvert. It does not need to be cured. It simply needs to be understood and accepted.”



While extroverts are known for being social and engaged in group settings, some may be shy in certain situations and environments. As Indie rocker Alex Kapranos once stated, “Just because you can leap off a drum kit doing a scissors kick while hitting a chord, people expect you to be an extrovert socially. But I’m not always comfortable with the idea of small talk at a party.”

All members of your organization, regardless of their degree of outgoingness, will appreciate an atmosphere that allows them to harness their skills within your Association network and nurture their desire for rewarding social interactions. Building a comfortable culture takes an understanding, openness to adjusting, and a willingness to offer a variety of offerings in order to appeal to the different member types.

Determining What Members Value

Different members of your group will value different things. While you can’t please everyone, it’s important to understand their preferences. If you don’t already, survey your membership to determine what they value in your organization. Ask specific questions about their preferences in regard to your programs, opportunities for involvement, what they would like to see handled

differently, how they prefer to be involved, etc. Also, be sure to ask about their preferred method of communication.

At the end of the survey, invite them to think about the people in their life who might enjoy your group's next meeting. After all, introverts often have close colleagues, and getting involved is much more comfortable when they have a friend they already know by their side; if your extroverts are engaged, they are likely to evangelize and help build your membership with this gentle reminder.

Adjusting What You Offer

Review your survey results and see what modifications your organization needs to make to better meet the needs of all members. As you find ways to address their suggestions, be sure to communicate that you have heard their feedback and are making positive changes as a result.

If you have small groups or committees or task forces, consider how you define "small." To some, a small group is ten to twelve people, but for introverts, it can mean two to three people. Offer a variety of formats and opportunities for involvement.

One surefire way to pull in some of your less-involved introverts is to reach out to them with a personal ask. Use the technology that they have indicated they prefer for communicating and avoid putting them on the spot in person. Consider their areas of expertise and then determine what will be a comfortable fit for them. While introverts might not be gung-ho on joining a committee, they might be very willing to provide some more individualized guidance by serving as a consultant or mentor within their area of expertise.

As you identify projects or initiatives that need attention, present your introverted members with an opportunity to share their insights in a low-pressure format. If you do ask them, create small groups – truly small with two to three people – and give them specific topics to address or tasks to complete. By giving a small group a curriculum, they will be able to share their insights without being on the spot to "come up with a plan to present." If those involved are interested in more in-depth group work, it will surface naturally. As the small group works together on an initiative, they will likely begin to develop a comfort level that will help increase engagement among all of them.



Facilitating Interactivity

True extroverts are simply seeking ways to connect with other people. Besides just encouraging each member to keep an up-to-date profile on your website in order to share about themselves, it's critical your Association allows extroverts to connect in a variety of ways.

At your networking events, be sure to offer a blend of free-for-all visiting along with intentional mingling activities with a purpose. Structure can go a long way to allow extroverts and introverts opportunities to meet several people comfortably when you describe the parameters up front. All personality types will appreciate understanding their expectations.

Try hosting a speed networking event at which members form two lines, face each other, and visit for pre-determined time periods (2 minutes) before everyone switches. This type of event takes the pressure of never-ending small talk out of the equation and provides an atmosphere that not only allows – but even encourages – making multiple connections in an atmosphere that doesn't diminish the value of true networking. Extroverts are less likely to be bored and introverts are more likely to participate when they know the time parameters. Plus, this format provides a foundation for actual discussion instead of endless small talk.

Encouraging Mentorships

It's important to consider the experiences of new members and how the engagement process works for them. When new members join your organization, consider having a mentorship program in place to ensure that all new members, introverts and extroverts alike, have someone to show them the ropes. While many will accompany the mentee for the first meeting or program, introverts will likely appreciate having that mentor by their side for the first several months.

Ask some of your outgoing members with gentle personalities to help welcome a few new members throughout the year. Extroverts thrive off new activities and people. Keep mixing up who they connect with, they feel more engaged as their connections grow. A mentor/mentee relationship is also comfortable for many introverts because it is a personal interaction versus large group.



Prior to a new member's first meeting, give their contact information to the mentor and ask them to reach out to the new member before the gathering, either through an invitation to coffee ahead of time or even a simple phone conversation to say welcome. The mentor should let the new person know that they will watch for them at the entrance at the first gathering and show them the ropes. All new members, regardless of personality type, will appreciate the follow through, but it will especially make an impact on the introverts or more shy extroverts. After that first meeting, have the mentor reach out to the new member again and ask how it went, then offer to sit with them for the next few meetings and to introduce them to others in the group.

Providing Opportunities to Be Featured

Your members have joined your Association for a reason – to expand their professional network and build connections. Consider providing a variety of options for featuring members, allowing them to share professional and personal information. Some Associations highlight a new member on their website each week, complete with a link to the featured member's LinkedIn page, website, and contact information. Many Associations also hold a round robin at the beginning of the meeting, asking each member to move into a large circle, then take turns spending 30 seconds introducing themselves, their company and the rest of their elevator speech.

One way to make the idea of being featured more appealing to introverted members is to welcome members to simply feature their business. They are often more comfortable highlighting their company versus themselves as a person. An easy way to make this available is to offer website advertising at a reasonable rate or e-newsletter advertising, and to hold drawings for free ads on occasion.

Whichever ways you choose for featuring your members, be sure to communicate the expectations and parameters on the front end.

Connecting Inside and Out

Your extroverted members will appreciate when you offer multiple opportunities to connect throughout the month. Your regularly scheduled meetings are important, but they are not the only way for members to network.

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Establish activities outside of your regular meetings in which members can participate. For instance, when you notice a group of members talking about attending an upcoming concert in the park, approach them and ask if they would like to extend an invitation to the rest of the membership.

From happy hours and concerts, to museum visits and service projects, you don't have to personally participate or host each of these events for members – simply facilitate the deepening of the connections they have established through their Association connections. By offering these types of activities outside of the scheduled meetings, your introverted members will appreciate knowing that these opportunities are optional, letting them off the hook of what is expected.

Reaching Them Where it Counts

You don't necessarily need different messages and events for every personality type within your organization, but it is critical that your members feel comfortable getting involved on their own terms. By embracing your introverts, extroverts, and every member in between, and by providing them comfortable opportunities to contribute, you will certainly see an engaged and growing group.

About GrowthZone

GrowthZone AMS helps organizations grow and retain membership, engage and inform members and prospects, and streamline tedious tasks.

The cloud-based system is powerful, easy to use, and designed to manage all the day-to-day operations of your organization. Guaranteed.