

How to Attract New Members to an Association



If you have been around associations for any length of time, you know that in the past, there was a fairly reliable pipeline for prospective members.

Young people would move directly from graduation to joining an industry-related association. All you had to do was take advantage of that momentum and make sure prospective members knew you were the best option to support career-related education, networking opportunities, and overall industry insights. ***But times have changed.***

With so many choices nowadays for younger professionals, associations need to stand out from the crowd. New membership recruitment strategies can help you reach a new audience and drive home your relevance and value of the membership. If you want to consistently attract new members to your association, you most likely need to evolve your current strategy. That means appealing to the younger generations through avenues that make sense to them.



Why Do People Join Associations?

For your marketing to land well with potential members, you'll first want to take a step back and reconsider why people join associations.

Sometimes we get so involved in the day-to-day of running our organizations that it's good to check back in and reorient ourselves with how and why our members come to us in the first place.

Professionals primarily join associations for three reasons. Through you, they hope to discover benefits, experience exclusivity, and enjoy a high level of trust.





Benefits

By and large, members join your association because of the membership benefits you offer.

You give them access to tools, content, skills, or relationships that they could not access elsewhere (or would be time-consuming to track down on their own). By becoming members, they have easier access to the resources they need to make progress in their careers.



Exclusivity

Members also join your association because membership sets them apart. By connecting with you, they can access rights and privileges only available to members of your association—ones unavailable to their non-member peers.

Exclusive access affords them an increased opportunity to level up.



Trust

Anyone can Google anything these days—so theoretically, prospective members may think they don't have the same need for associations as they once did. But as anyone who's ever spent time on internet searches can tell you, easy access to "information" doesn't ensure that searchers will immediately connect with the most accurate, reputable, or timely content.

As an authority in your space, you offer members a level of confidence in trustworthy information that they are less likely to access through free resources.

8 Steps to Take Right Now

Figuring out how to attract new members to your association amid a changing landscape can be challenging. Fortunately, we here at Impexium have noticed some approaches that really do seem to work.

Better still, we've created systems and structures to help you accomplish these tasks quickly and effectively.

- ✓ Gain referrals from current members
- ✓ Offer perks, discounts, and free trials
- ✓ Connect with younger members on the most relevant social media platform
- ✓ Elevate storytelling
- ✓ Show up live
- ✓ Gain feedback from current members
- ✓ Host your own (free!) events
- ✓ Ensure existing members are engaged and happy



01

Gain referrals from current members.

Along with an engaging social media presence and email campaigns, constructing a robust membership referral program is one of the [top three best ways](#) to recruit new members to your association. Yet many associations rely on the first two and drop the ball on referral programs.

Perhaps they might feel that setting one up is too much work. The good news is that an AMS such as Impexium has automation tools make setting up a member referral program quick and easy to implement.



02

Offer perks, discounts, and free trials.

Everybody loves feeling as if they've gotten something for nothing. That's why perks, discounts, and free trials are so effective in attracting new members to your association. But you know what they say. Easy come, easy go.

Limited-time offers may effectively draw in the curious who may not otherwise have considered joining. However, without a robust onboarding process, your prospective members will be more likely to quit when their perks arrive, their discounts time out, or their free trials expire.

Your AMS should enable you to take advantage of seamless automations. This will enable you to put in place a robust onboarding process so that members will engage and connect right away—and stick around over the long haul.



03

Connect with younger members on the most relevant social media platform.

The eldest of Gen Z are now hitting the workforce, and they're a new and fresh generation of workers with their own unique experiences and perspectives.

Members of Gen Z are more racially and ethnically diverse than any previous generation, and they are on track to be the most well-educated generation yet. They are also digital natives who have little or no memory of the world as it existed before smartphones.

[Pew Research Center](#)



Engage with Them Online

While the lines between younger Millennials and the elder Gen Z may seem fuzzy, it's worth your while to understand this younger generation so that you can reach them where they are—online.



Use the Power of Social Media

That means forgoing more traditional membership recruitment techniques and establishing a social media presence on:

- YouTube
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat



Find Where Members Are

The best way to engage with younger potential members of your association is to discover where they're hanging out (either in person or online), create an intentional presence there, and make use of that presence to connect and draw them into your association.

04

Elevate storytelling.

Allowing people to tell their stories about the personal benefits of being an association member is one of the most powerful tools in your toolkit.

To take best advantage of it, create systems in your member life cycle by which current members can tell their stories about how involvement in your association has helped them.

To help members tell their stories, you can create systems by which they can:

- **Share pictures**
- **Post their wins**
- **Create audio or video clips of big moments**
- **Share testimonials**

Gather and share these stories publicly in order to attract new members who want similar outcomes.



Stories are **22 times more memorable** than facts. Is it any wonder that so much of branding and marketing now relies on storytelling?

05

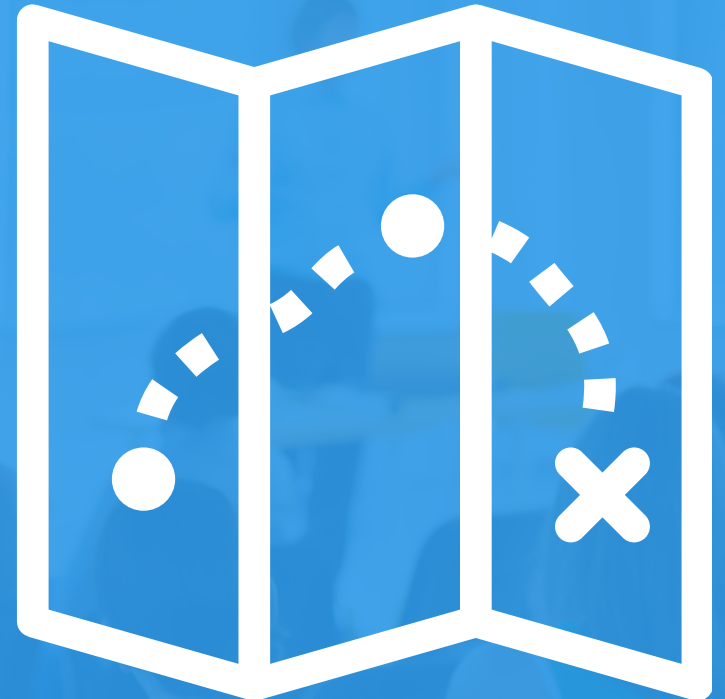
Show up live.

People are hungry to connect in person. This is particularly true for workers who have spent the last two years working remotely and only engaging with other professionals online, either through apps like Teams and Trello or via Google Meet and Zoom.

Showing up in person can be complicated, and how you approach this will depend on the type of industry your association serves. But even with the challenges, it makes a lot of sense to show up at existing live events and connect with potential members.

- Conferences
- Job fairs or recruitment events
- College and university events
- Awards ceremonies

Showing up at scheduled, live events and connecting with prospective members in person can make a lasting impression that draws people into membership in your association.



06

Gain valuable feedback from current members.

When it comes to understanding what members find valuable about your association, your current members afford you a wealth of helpful data.

Step 1

A modern-day AMS provides you with the tools and dashboards needed to see how your current members are interacting with your programs and services.

Step 2

Once you see what people love and what the most popular items are among your offerings, you can shape your membership marketing to highlight these benefits.

Step 3

You can do this internally (to amp up your member referral program) and externally (to draw in any and all prospective members).



Where might people spend most of their time?

- Workshops
- Networking
- Mentorship programs
- Certifications
- Volunteer opportunities
- Philanthropy
- Webinars

07

Host your own (free!) events.

Hosting a free event that appeals to prospective members is a great way to put yourself on their radar.

Whether you host your events online or in-person will depend on many factors. Whatever you decide in that regard, free events sponsored by your association carry quite a few advantages.

- Free events give prospective members a chance to see what you are all about and the value you can bring to their lives.
- Free events also offer you avenues by which to connect to young professionals and introduce them to your association.

Take advantage of an AMS with automation and data-management tools help ensure that once prospective members have signed up, none of your efforts will go to waste.



08

Ensure existing members are engaged and happy.

Remember, your current members are the best ambassadors your association can ask for. Therefore, it's vital to keep current members engaged and happy.



Automation

This is where automation tools can really come in handy, allowing you to effortlessly build campaigns that will sort and engage new members as soon as they join.



Dashboards

Count on your association management software's dashboards keep you constantly updated on member engagement, taking the guesswork out of how best to shape the onboarding process.

(Remember, this is especially important if you offer a free 30-day trial!)



Referrals

When your existing members are involved and happy, they're in the best position possible to draw in other members—who, in their turn, refer others.



Feedback Loop

That kind of positive feedback loop could keep your association growing for years to come. *And we can help you build it.*

We've Got You.

Deciding how to attract new members to your association doesn't have to be a painful process.

Impexium has the tools you need to analyze your recent data and use it to create the best marketing campaigns to attract and retain new members. Request a demo and see all we have to offer!

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)

