

Member Retention Ideas from Sigma Theta Tau International headquarters

New Member Retention

1. Hold a new member orientation. This could be an informal pitch-in dinner, pizza party, summer reception, etc.
2. Form a “New Member Welcoming Committee”—subgroup of Membership Involvement Committee— responsible for making new members feel welcome and comfortable.
3. Send a survey to six-month old members asking them to “rate” the chapter.
4. Announce and introduce new members at meetings, including new transfer or dual members.
5. Get new members involved immediately so they feel a part of the chapter. This could mean serving on a committee or just helping with a one-time event such as a community service project or a social gathering.
6. Target special mailings to new members.
7. Develop a new-member mentoring program. Assign a mentor to each new member to help guide them through the first couple of years as a chapter member and as a nurse.
8. Send a first year anniversary letter to the new member.
9. During the first year of membership, offer a discounted rate to at least one chapter function.
10. Hold at least one chapter activity each year that is specially designed and designated for the recent graduate member.
11. Send new inductees a welcome letter within a month after induction. Labels are available from headquarters.
12. “Showcase” student inductees’ research posters.
13. Offer monetary sponsorships to help student members attend the biennial convention and other educational programs.
14. Send congratulatory notes to new graduates.
15. Encourage hospitality: “Board of Directors Welcomes New Members”
16. Induct students in the fall semester so they can be involved in chapter events for the remainder of the school year.
17. Ask new members to contribute a short article or piece about him/herself for the chapter newsletter or Web site.
18. Form a “support group” for new nurses who are making the transition from school to practice.
19. Encourage graduating students to let the chapter know when and where they are moving to, so the chapter can provide the names of local chapters the student can transfer to after the move is complete.
20. Reimburse the first year’s chapter fee for new members who actively serve on a committee during the first year of membership.
21. Consider holding a new member orientation prior to the induction ceremony. This guarantees the attendance of most, if not all, of your new members.

“Seasoned” Member Retention

22. Recognize member milestone anniversaries.
23. Ask older members to contribute to the newsletter describing things they remember about their early nursing career.
24. Keep senior or retired members active within the chapter by serving on committees, planning groups, etc.
25. Organize purely social events for retired members such as monthly card games, breakfasts, etc. to keep them involved with other chapter members.
26. Survey the membership (annually?) to determine what the membership’s needs are, and then plan according to the results. Don’t stop at just asking.

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27. Continue to involve past chapter presidents as advisors, judges for awards, consultants, mentors, etc.

Any Member Retention

28. Contact some of the least active members for their opinion on important chapter issues.
29. Send congratulatory notes to members who are recognized in their company, community or other organization.
30. Have a “member of the month” promo in a newsletter—should not consist of just past and present leaders, but should highlight any member’s accomplishments.
31. Notify a member’s employer when a member assumes a leadership role within the chapter.
32. Notify a member’s employer when he/she is recognized in the chapter via award, scholarship, research grant, etc.
33. Rotate dates, times and location of meetings. (i.e. not always the third Tuesday of the month, not always a dinner meeting, not always on campus, etc.) [Breakfast meetings – Xi Alpha]
34. Regarding local member benefits—Tell the member what they get for the membership, give it to them and then tell them what they got!
35. Remember that membership value is different for each person. When recruiting or retaining a member, try to find out what’s important to him/her.
36. Include pictures in chapter newsletters. Members love to see each other pictured and recognized.
37. “Assign” members to committees. (Tactfully ask *which* committee they would like to serve on, not *if* they would like to serve).
38. Don’t try to compete with other chapters—particularly ones in the same area. Make members aware of dual and transfer options.
39. Encourage members to apply for regional and international awards.
40. Ask all members for e-mail addresses. This is an easy, cheap and quick form of communication.

Recognizing Members

41. Notify employers when a member has done something of value for the chapter, or has been recognized with an award, scholarship, research grant, etc.
42. Publish member names in the chapter newsletter for the same reasons listed above.
43. Have a “Heroes of the Month” section in your newsletter or on the chapter Web site.
44. Honor members with chapter awards. Seek to honor those who are often overlooked, such as a practicing nurse who devotes a lot of time and energy to volunteer work.
45. Recognize extraordinary nurses annually.
46. Recognize new transfer and dual members through the newsletter and chapter programs.
47. Publicize nominations, awards and inductees in chapter newsletters, university news and public press.
48. Nominate chapter members for regional and international awards and officer positions.
49. Present certificates of recognition to local members for chairing or directing projects or contributing in any significant way.
50. Create a “brag column” in chapter newsletter to share members’ accomplishments.
51. Periodically remind each member of his/her importance and value to the organization.
52. Extraordinary accomplishments should always be recognized publicly and in writing.
53. Never underestimate the power of a personal thank you note!
54. Recognize members who always contribute (money) to fund-raisers and events.

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55. Send letters to all officers, committee chairs and committee members to thank them for serving as their terms end. If possible, include a few, specific examples of how their efforts benefited the chapter.

Recapturing “Lost” Members

56. Hold a Dial-a-Member Campaign for inactive members. (The Member Service Center at Headquarters can provide materials for you.)
57. Develop a list of renewal objections and learn how to refute them. (This also applies to recruiting or retaining any member).
58. Learn the benefits of the society and promote them! (This also applies for recruiting or retaining any member).
59. Try to find out why a member doesn't renew— try developing a specialized survey for inactive members or make personal phone calls.
60. Print “missing members” names in the chapter newsletter or on the chapter's Web site and ask members who know of their whereabouts to contact the chapter.
61. Conduct a “letter writing campaign” for inactive members.
62. Mail letters to inactive members with a note to simply sign and return to the chapter if the member would like to renew. Then, contact headquarters and ask those members to be mailed renewal notices.
63. Have board/committee members and all active members call a “lost” member and personally invite them to the next meeting or event.