

## **We WANT YOU BACK - COURTING DROPPED MEMBERS**

**No matter how large your prospect list, your dropped list is even bigger.** There's a high likelihood that the number of dropped members exceeds your current membership base. Yet, we continuously "hunt" and target those who have never been members. **Have you thought about courting dropped members to rejoin?**

After re-reading the Associations Now article [How Big is Your Build-Up of Past Members?](#) I was curious about the quote from Kevin Whorton who stated that the pool of past members is generally at least twice as large as the current membership.

So, I pulled a report through the AMS (Association Management System) for a client I'm working with to compare the size of its current membership base to the list of dropped members. The report shows 2,561 members and 7,822 dropped members. That means there are three times as many dropped members than current ones!

### **Are All Dropped Members Worth Courting?**

Some drops are due to attrition beyond your control such as mergers and acquisitions, death of an owner, business relocation or failure. All other members dropped for other reasons and you will want to establish criteria to determine which should become your prospects. Sample criteria may include:

- **High Worth Members:** Those who delivered a considerable ROI to your organization through their dues and non-due investments. You could run a report like the sample below of all dropped members and filter results by Total Revenue. You may decide that the Top 100 is who you want back!
- **Recent Losses:** Memberships that lapsed 7 to 24 months ago. Perhaps you feel these are relationships that can be salvaged by a staff or volunteer leader. You may also want to prioritize this list based on other criteria
- **Aged Losses:** Memberships that lapsed more than 24 months ago. Much has changed with the organization and what it offers. It might be the right time to reach out to a new decision maker or to market what's new and improved. Consider other criteria to create a manageable target list
- **Tomorrow's Members:** Based on demographics or your target markets, these members represent who you feel should be part of the organization and whose engagement is essential.

## Benefits of Win-Back Campaigns

There are several reasons why you should consider targeting dropped members with win-back campaigns:

- You have their contact info (unless they relocated or are no longer in business)
- You can learn and improve on what you offer, and changes needed operationally from dropped members who share their not-so-positive experiences
- You re-establish a more positive relationship with these members
- You can detect other at-risk members based on common factors
- You control the negative word-of-mouth impact from unhappy past members
- You reap financial rewards for getting them to rejoin and re-engage

## So, Where Do You Start?

1. **Analyze** — your dropped list, define which members are considered as officially dropped and not receiving benefits.
2. **Target** — determine which members you want to court to rejoin and why.
3. **Plan** — develop target groups, messaging for each, your approach (and offers), responsibilities to re-engage them and timelines. *(For example, the American Association for Respiratory Care focused on message of “Two Steps and You’re Back in Class” for newly lapsed members and “Rediscover AARC” for those who lapsed 7-24 months ago.)*
4. **Execute** — Consider launching the campaign to small batches of dropped members, monitoring outcomes and adjusting your approach as you go along. Soon, you’ll have the perfected campaign!

## Focus on Positive Re-Engagement

Part of your win-back campaign plan should include engagement monitoring and support to ensure that dropped members who rejoin are engaged and having a more positive experience than the one before.

**Are you ready to develop a Win-Back campaign to court dropped members to rejoin?** If you’ve been doing this successfully, what lessons learned could you share with others?

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