

Pacific Northwest Section ~ American Water Works Association

Membership Plan Update ~ 2010

Introduction

The Section's membership plan was first developed in 2003, with the intention to be updated annually, to identify actions to be carried out through following year. In support of the Section and to increase membership and improve retention, the following 2010 update to the PNWS Section Plan will focus on key milestones for the coming year. The intent is for the plan to be dynamic and updated each year to reflect the goals and objectives of the Membership Committee and the Board of Trustees, as well as allowing for adaptation to the current economic culture and other external conditions that may affect membership statistics. To support the success of this plan, it will be essential for the Membership Committee to meet or teleconference on a quarterly basis to evaluate progress as well as have full support of the Board of Trustees. This plan has been divided into two parts based upon the two major areas of focus: retention and recruitment.

Section Goals and Current Procedures

The goal of the Membership Committee is to promote activities which retain current members and recruit new members to the Pacific Northwest Section of AWWA. Objectives include:

- Meeting the Association's goals of 1 percent membership growth and 90 percent membership retention, including adding 2 utility members from within the section yearly.
- Increasing the retention and involvement of existing Section membership and improving the responsiveness to member needs.
- Facilitating communication to help new members feel welcome and integrated into the Section by sending a Welcome Packet and survey to link new members with area(s) of interest within the Section.
- Creating an environment of membership appreciation through raffles and emails.
- Recruitment of new members that represent the diverse cross section of society employed in the water industry.

Current procedures in place to support the goals include:

- PNWS Executive Director provides new member information to the Trustees and subsections chairs.
- PNWS Executive Director sends the member a welcome letter, pin, Section brochure describing Section activities, interest survey, and conference schedule and committee structure.
- Continued development of website tools to assist new and existing members in finding information about the Section and the Association. This includes an online interest survey.

Retention Strategy

Many tools and options are available to assist in retention. The following are actions to be accomplished to support retention.

Website - The Section website should be utilized in the following ways:

- Make the interest survey available on-line to ensure a greater response rate.
- Update the Membership Committee's page to reflect retention activities. Incorporate the tools found through the Membership Summit and regional meetings.
- Consider the purchase of promotional items with the Section web address to promote the Section and its activities. These items should be sent to the new members six months after joining to remind them to visit the Section website for committee activities and be available at the Section conference to pass out to current members.

Communications – Increase communication between the Section and new members.

- The Membership Committee will develop an outline for contacting new members. The focus will be to help new members match their interests and to get involved in the Pacific Northwest Section and the Association.
- Interest survey needs to be automated to allow for a better link between new members and areas of interest. Interest form will include questions regarding why they value AWWA membership to better understand how to best serve each member.
- The Membership Committee can develop member appreciation outreach for members during the Membership Appreciation week. This can include highlighting and thanking member utilities and service providers in Water Matters.
- Young Professionals- Include one or two younger members on the Membership Committee willing to increase a better link to new members which fall in the Young Professional group.
- Utilize the Section newsletter to promote membership and show appreciation (ie, benefits of being a member, summarizing specific events/accomplishments; "Value of Membership").
- Develop an e-mail list of members (can be a percentage), based on interest survey results, to send focused e-mail pieces identifying an upcoming training or event.
- Development of contact list for members that are within month of membership renewal or have recently dropped. This would be to remind them that their membership is about to lapse and to highlight the benefits of membership and be sure they are engaged.

Special Events - The Section should hold special functions for new and existing members to facilitate relationship building.

- Work with Young Professional Committee on developing an activity for first time attendees either through Scavenger Hunt or a "mixer" at the Section Conference.
- Membership booth at Section Conference to focus on membership retention by providing information on the value of membership, including gifts to those who come by

and confirm profile information is current. Have a drawing for those who comment on the value of membership.

Recruitment Strategy

Constant recruitment of AWWA and the PNWS Section is necessary to sustain the organization. Sustainability is easier to achieve if retention is maintained. The focus is to work with the Association-developed recruiting tools and efforts to keep this manageable.

- Develop "Member-Get-A-Member Program" as part of the Association's program and offer T-shirts to everyone who gets a new member as well as offering a grand prize for the member who gets the most members.
- Consider developing a subsection membership drive competition that can be kicked off at the SAC/Winter Trustee Meeting.
- Consider partnering with the Young Professional Committee and plan to participate in one job/career fair at the college level.

Communications/marketing - The Section has accomplished a lot over the years and these accomplishments should be promoted. Small efforts can be communicated of the benefits as well as market the Association. Marketing is only a small component of membership development. Communication and marketing is the key to developing pride and appreciation from the current and future membership.

- Consider partnering with the Young Professional Committee and plan to participate in one job/career fair at the college or community college level.
- Consider issuing press releases announcing events to get the PNWS name out there (ie tapping contest winners, election of new board members, awards received, etc). Many local papers will print these special interest items and this will provide visibility for PNWS.

Schedule

To ensure the implementation of the plan, benchmarks and self/committee evaluation should be conducted on a quarterly basis to track progress.

- Hold Regular Membership meetings or teleconferences every quarter.
- Assign a lead committee member for recruitment activities, retention activities, and website management to lessen the burden.
- Assign dates for completion to serve as benchmarks for accomplishments.
- COMMUNICATE EARLY AND OFTEN TO OUR MEMBERS!