

# Ohio State Bar Association Recruitment and Retention Projects

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## **General Recruitment**

Free memberships to students AND first-year lawyers to get them involved.

- We visit each law school and pass out applications – give away free pizza and do a \$100 drawing from the applications returned that day. Periodically stuff student mailboxes with information.
- Attend the swearing-in ceremonies and sponsor a new admittee reception following it. Pass out OSBA portfolios that contain member benefit information and an update form that must be returned in order to activate the free membership.

Direct mail pieces – always personalized and targeted to a particular demographic. Usually in conjunction with new program/benefit. Some dues promotion is usually offered.

CLE – the OSBA sponsors more than 300 CLE seminars annually. A membership application and flyer are bound into the back of all of our coursebooks. This year I sent a recruitment letter at the end of the year to all non-members who attended one of our seminars, explaining how much they can save on CLE by becoming a member.

Dues discounts:

- If register as non-member at convention, can get 50% off to join
- Members who bring a non-member to a district meeting and sign him or her up for membership at the meeting both receive 50% off next year's dues.
- Promote the fact that our dues are prorated quarterly.

## **Other**

### **In 2001:**

People who had let their membership lapse in the last 5 years received a “timeline” brochure outlining all the new services that were unveiled in the last 5 years. Wasn't too successful – only 1.5% response.

### **New in 2003:**

Hot Prospects list – sent leadership (members of the Council of Delegates and Board of Governors) lists of all the non-members in their district. Asked them to highlight those people who they felt would be good candidates for membership – developed into a “hot

prospects” list of 430 people on whom we will focus extra recruitment efforts. After first mailing, 16 people (3.7%) have joined (mailing only went out a couple weeks ago).

## **Retention**

Implemented a **“new member” plan** last year. Consists of:

- 5 monthly mailings – first has member card and Member Services Guide. The others outline particular benefits (CLE, technology, committees/sections, discount programs, insurance).
- A welcome call from the Call Center after their 4th month of membership
- An online new member survey e-mailed 2x per year – how are we doing?
- So far, retention rates have been improving, but hasn’t been a full year.

### **General OSBA retention schedule:**

- Two rounds of dues statements (mailed ~ Oct./Dec.)
- Over-size postcard reminder (mailed mid-January) – “Unless you pay your dues, the last issue of *Ohio State Bar Association Report* you will receive will be \_\_\_\_\_, and your membership will be terminated.”
- Cover-only OBAR (mid-March) – two weeks after last issue. This looks just like the weekly report, only it is just the cover – nothing inside! The front says “Missing something?”
- Terminate unpaid members in early April (but internally we still refer to them as delinquent members). Terminated members receive a “you haven’t paid your dues” pop-up message if try to log on to the Web site/Casemaker.
- Phone-A-Thon (July-August) – staff retention effort. 3 weeks of calling members terminated in April + month to receive payments.
- Lapsed member survey (mid-September) – last formal contact

### **Other projects:**

- Executive director’s column in *Ohio Lawyer* highlights member benefits/what the OSBA is doing for members.
- A section of *Ohio Lawyer* lists all member benefit programs. Serves as constant reminder.

### **Future project:**

We would love to track member usage of **all** benefits and services in our database. Then we could send a personalized letter to members, prior to or even with their dues statement, showing all that they got for their membership dues that year – sort of a “report card” format.

### **Recommended book on membership recruitment and retention:**

“Beyond Membership Marketing: Developing an Innovative Plan that Guarantees Results” by Patricia A. Siegel, CAE, and James S. DeLizia, CAE. Published in 1999 by the Center for Excellence in Association Leadership (in San Francisco). Phone: (650) 355-4094; E-mail: ceainfo@aol.com