

AAUW MEMBERSHIP RETENTION PLAN

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Have a plan to integrate new members into the branch **before** you recruit them. Today's younger women, working or not, have different needs and schedules than earlier generations. While we need to respect tradition, our planning must face forward to address today's environment. Time is precious; children often have schedules as busy as adults. Success in opening job markets to women has brought both opportunities and burdens. Women generally earn 75% of men's salaries for the same work and shoulder many traditional burdens like home making and child rearing while pursuing careers.

Accommodate their schedules and concerns to keep Boomers and Gen Xers involved in AAUW. What are these concerns? The two most often mentioned are networking opportunities and stress reduction, but the best thing is to ask. And, don't forget current long-time members, parallel programming works. These women are our future and we need them. Remember, someone kept AAUW healthy for you; every one of us has an obligation to do this for others.

6 Ways to Make New Members Feel Welcome

1. Send them a welcome, the form doesn't matter, it's the thought that counts.
2. Introduce new members in your newsletter with contact info and a brief bio.
3. Hold a new member orientation to understand the basics of what's going on and how to get involved.
4. Have your members make a debut at the first meeting they attend as a new member, but warn them first.
5. Drive new members to their first meeting so they'll know someone when they get there.
6. Large branches – hold a new member reception; give them a chance to meet board members.

5 Ways to Help Activate Your New Members

1. Create a new member welcome kit with current directory, welcome letter, benefits, website address, and
1. how to get involved.
2. Have a "guidance counselor" call them to explore why they joined, provide them with names and numbers of appropriate committee chairs, and forward new member contacts to chairs.
3. Approach new members in many different ways over a period of time, ask what's the most valuable
4. they've gotten out of involvement in your branch and what else they'd like to see done.
5. Teach new members how to network, include networking tips in the new member kit and newsletter.
6. Get your board involved by providing them with a periodic new member listing their skills, and assign board members to call new members who have yet to attend a meeting.

When you discover a strategy that works – share it! Send an e-mail or note to the NYS Membership VP so winning strategies can be shared. There are many ways to address an issue, branches are unique in size and milieu so one approach doesn't work everywhere.

Finally, examine your efforts on a regular basis to build on your strengths and fix or discard what isn't working.

Having raced on a variety of sailboats, here comes the sports analogy. The boats in the bottom half of the pack usually had skippers who were busy being "SKIPPERs", crew were unclear what their duties were, there was a lot of interference in what others were doing instead of attention to one's own job, crew skills and duties were often mismatched, politics were rampant, and there was little or no analysis of the race.

The boats in the top half of the fleet had skippers who took time to learn what they had to know to win the race.

Crew were clear about their duties, they worked as a team helping where help was needed otherwise tending to their job, crew skills and jobs were matched as much as possible, crew asked for and received assistance without fear of criticism, politics were minimum, and races were always analyzed no matter where the boat placed so strengths were maximized and weaknesses dealt with.

So, where do you want to place in the race?