



Retention Ideas

(Compiled from Suggestions by 2001-02 Civitan International Board of Directors and Membership Marketing Team)

Recruitment/Expectations

- During recruitment process tell prospect what is expected of them as a member.
- Tell the prospect about projects the club is currently supporting (last year and this year—not some project the club hasn't done for several years).
- Recruit prospects that show interest in the types of projects and activities your club is involved in.
- Target specific new members. Does your club need profession people? Doctors or Lawyers? Teachers? Local Agencies' representatives? Conduct a membership recruitment meeting just for members under 40? Get the idea. Target what your club needs!
- Schedule membership meetings well in advance in order to properly plan and execute successful drives

Orientation

- Establish an effective orientation and education program for entire membership.
- Make orientation a very special time for the new member. (Consider asking their family members, spiritual leader etc. to attend the meeting.)
- Work hard to improve the New Member Orientation process.
- Give them pamphlets and tell the new member about Civitan. Let them know how we are making a difference—be proud of Civitan and what it is accomplishing not only locally, but also internationally and through the Civitan International Research Center.
- Conduct one-on-one orientation. Why wait months waiting for another member to join? Have the new member, sponsoring member and club trainer meet together at a home or extended lunch. Use a prepared packet for orientation, i.e., club roster, club calendar, Civitan literature, give the new member kit at this time.
- Promote and utilize the VIP program.

Involvement

- Use a "New Member Assessment" document to determine what each new member would be willing to do.
- To keep up the momentum after recruitment, immediately assign definite responsibilities and encourage (invite) the new member to become involved in club activities (committee membership, help on service projects, give them a candy box and/or a coin box to place). Many will not volunteer until they feel accepted.
- Give a candy box and bag of candy to every new member at time of initiation. Let it be an 'expectation' to place a candy box, not a 'hope'.
- Be involved yourself and involve every member in something.
- Don't give a member more than they can handle to prevent burn out. (On the other hand failure to involve them will cause them to leave.)
- Make sure each committee is working by requiring a report at the monthly business meeting.
- Have small project groups with goals, plans, and responsibility instead of large committees where many of the committee members end up being inactive.
- A personal visit to the new member by Club President and, or Club Membership Chair, if possible (as a last resort E-Mail) to make him or her feel Welcome and Important!

Buddy and/or Mentor Program

- Use a survey to determine the new member's interests (hobbies, etc.). Then address those interests. Establish a mentoring program which would connect other members with similar interests with the new member.
- Assign an old member (not the sponsoring member) to a "buddy system" to be in charge of the new member to be sure they come to meetings and take part in projects and/or social events
- Have a buddy program all members call each other about meetings and projects, perhaps divide membership up into pairs. If a member is absent, his partner "buddy" is responsible for knowing why his buddy isn't present. If he doesn't know, he is fined \$.25 or \$.50.
- Work hard to eliminate any "closed groups" within the club and do not let them become clicks, that can ruin a club.

Build Loyalty

- Help the new member set a goal for bringing in another new member and then help them in achieving that goal. Loyalty is established when the member feels he or she has played a part in the growth & well being of the club.

Projects

- Make sure the club has good projects and good programs and gets good PR for the meetings to keep the members interested and to arouse interest of others within the community.
- Continually revamp and replace service projects to keep them interesting and to answer the changing needs. Sponsor projects that most club members are interested in participating in.

- Talk with new members and use them as a resource for ideas about different ways of providing service, raising money, and conducting the general business of the club.
- Build a new senior, Campus, or Junior Civitan club. This can be a useful service project for club members.

Meetings

- START AND END MEETINGS ON TIME—respect the time frame a member has to work with in today’s busy world.
- Keep meetings upbeat and positive and enthusiastic.
- Conduct limited business, if any, and have a speaker or other interesting program.

Programs

- Have varied and entertaining programs—not the same types of programs over & over.
- Seek the advice of members on speakers, types of programs, etc.

Socials/Fun— Keep the Fun in Civitan

- Interesting programs—the guest speakers should be invited for reasons other than requesting money.
- Enjoyable fundraisers—fundraisers could be made into a competition between teams with, perhaps, a humorous prize for the winners.
- Innovative ways of providing service.
- Schedule a club social at least once each quarter.
- Get together outside meeting place to have a meal or refreshments.
- Plan some new, crazy activities.
- Encourage visitations to other clubs — Not only can a great deal of fellowship take place but visitation is one of the best sources of knowledge. By seeing how the other Civitans conduct business and run a meeting, we can compare and improve our own situations.

Greeters

- Preselected greeters welcome guests as they arrive.
- President secretly selects a member who arrives early as the Mystery Greeter. They determine that the 3 or 5 or whatever person shakes his or her hand is the winner of an award. During the meeting the President calls on the Mystery Greeter to see who won. The award can be a Civitan coffee mug, Civitan key chain, or whatever.

Training

- Select carefully and properly train club officers.
- Make sure new members with leadership abilities are not overlooked. We need to begin moving them towards taking on significant roles quickly. They should be encouraged and trained as they go through each position such as event chair, club director, club secretary/treasurer and so on.

Finances/Cost

- Keep membership costs in line with income - If it gets too expensive to retain membership people will leave. A well-run club will see to it that there are no costs out of line with the average income of the members. For example: a pot-luck dinner instead of restaurant fare is an easy way to keep costs down, and it increases fellowship and fun at the same time.
- Dues should be paid a quarter in advance or have a yearly dues with a small discount for paying a full years dues in advance.
- Club dues should also be somewhat flexible to meet a member’s needs at a point. Determine if most members prefer to have meals included in the dues structure. (Perhaps change the meeting place to accommodate the wishes of the majority of the members.)
- Club should not let a member run a tab on the club; too often they walk off owing a lot of money.

Flexibility

- Be flexible with meeting attendance and project participation.

Public Relations/Publicity

- Use Club newsletter to promote meetings and projects (newsletter should be regular and frequent).
- Include information or profile on new members in the newsletter.
- Use electronic mail as meeting/project reminders.
- Create interest in Civitan by providing local newspapers interesting articles, with pictures, for publication.

Miscellaneous

- Clubs should renew their commitment and dedication to Civitan and make sure they continually add members, whether the individuals are young, middle age, or older.
- Sometimes, some motivation and enthusiasm is all that is needed in a club that is floundering. These should utilize the services of the Club Rebuilding Catalyst program or some other outside resource.

Find these retention ideas on the Internet at <http://www.civitan.org/retentionideas.pdf>.