

RELEVANCE

Relevance should be the primary goal of your membership engagement strategies.

Everything can only happen if the message is interesting enough to open and the reader is sticking around for the story.

Relevance is the hub of a wheel with 8 spokes that are critical to keeping your membership campaigns rolling. If any of the spokes are weak or missing, your marketing won't be as effective.

Relevance means – relating to the matter at hand; pertinent; to the point. Implies close logical relationship with, and importance to, the matter under consideration.

SEGMENTS

Hopefully, you are segmenting your members into lists – active members
past members
prospects, etc.

The more you can personalize your message, the better the response will be. For example, can you identify members who join and never do anything and those that are ready to take-on many responsibilities.

OFFER

Some organizations conduct fund raising campaigns and the segments list from above will help in tailoring your message to each of these groups. These might include an invitation to a special event or acknowledgment for their support of a particular cause.

STORY

If you had 7 seconds to get your recipient's attention and tell them why they should join your organization, what would you say? The best place to start a membership appeal is with a powerful headline that draws the reader in.

Follow your headline up by telling a story that describes the challenge, establishes why the recipient should care (appeals to their emotions) and tells them how they can help. Your organization may be focused on many initiatives, but resist the urge to try to share them all – you'll only turn off the recipient.

PROOF

What are your organizations latest triumphs? Sharing them is a great way to keep active members engaged and help prospects or lapsed members get involved. Do you have statistics or testimonials that help prove the effectiveness of your advocacy?

Create a sidebar or graph to shine a spotlight on your success. People scan e-mails, blogs and printed materials before they dig deeper. Make sure your proof points pop off the page.

CALL-TO-ACTION – ACT

The biggest mistake many organizations make is NOT making it clear why people should join or rejoin the organization – NOW. Create a sense of urgency. You are competing not only against your recipient's time and money, but every other form of advertising they are being subjected to on a given day.

You need to encourage them to act when you have their attention. This also means repeating your call to action several times in the same communication – particularly in your e-mails and on your website.

Take a page out of the best of consumer marketing playbook. Look at e-mails you receive from retailers. They weave many ways for the customer to buy throughout their promotions. You should do the same.

MEASUREMENT

How do you measure success? Number of new members? Number of renewals? A combination of the two? Do you have a system in place for measuring results and tracking them over time? If you don't, your campaigns will be run more on intuition than fact. That doesn't bode well for the longevity of any organization.

POST MORTEM

When the campaign is over, how do you share what worked and what didn't and who gets to contribute to the discussion? It's a shame that many people with institutional knowledge aren't given the opportunity to help make things better by participating in a post mortem.

There's nothing like a 'shut the phones off, 3-hour honest assessment while the data is fresh' meeting to generate ideas and get the team fired up about the next promotion. Distribute the notes from this meeting, so you can.

IMPLEMENT LEARNINGS

Your campaign should constantly evolve to take advantage of your recent learnings and fine tune your messages to each of your membership segments. Doing more of what works and less of what doesn't is the best way to achieve success and maximize your return on the hard work.