

## In This Issue...

10 Tips to Increase  
Member Renewal Rates . . .1

Maximize the Effectiveness  
of Your Committees  
& Volunteers . . . . .1

2011 Public Policy  
Priorities . . . . .2

Farewell to  
Chris Bolan . . . . .3

Calendar of Events . . . . .4

Chamber Members  
Invited to Participate . . . .4

## Publication Dates

January, April,  
July and October

## Deadlines for article submission

Dec. 15, Mar. 15,  
June 15 and Sept. 15

This newsletter is  
distributed to members  
of the New Hampshire  
Association of Chamber  
of Commerce Executives

*Published/Edited*  
Maltzie Dezign LLC  
bmaltzie@gmail.com  
for information or to be  
added to the mailing list.

## 10 Tips to Increase Member Renewal Rates

For those who use a calendar-based membership term, December and January can be the scariest months of the year. A few years ago, a Chamber CEO called me in February and she said in a panic-stricken voice, “25% of our members did not renew! How can that be when just several months ago members gave us a 95% satisfaction rate?”

High satisfaction rates don’t guarantee renewals or long term loyalty to an association. Satisfaction has more to do with the “rear view mirror” than it does with the “windshield” or the future. No one gets too far driving while using past success indicators. Although most associations employ a fiscal year based membership based on the join date, similar panic attacks can still occur. What can you do to ensure higher renewal rates in 2011?

The first 5 of these tips are ways you can increase renewal rates by changing the process or payment options. The other 5 require more commitment to focus on proactive, long term retention strategies.

1) Allow 24/7 online renewals—Send out renewal reminders via e-mail with a link for members to renew online through a secured

shopping cart. Allow members to update their profile and their preferences.

2) Offer renewal incentives—Some members are enticed with getting something extra by acting with a sense of urgency. Offer a free seminar or webinar, small ad in a future publication, or an enhanced listing on the web site if renewals occur before a stated deadline.

3) Enclose postage paid envelopes – Make it easy for members who want to mail in their renewals by providing an easy way to do so.

4) Offer multiple year memberships—Rather than hit members up for a renewal year after year, consider offering a discount on a 2 or 3 year membership. It could provide a needed tax deduction for the year and gives members an incentive to “lock in their rates.”

5) Allow for automatic credit card renewals—Whether it’s done annually, quarterly or monthly, this is the age of the “pleasure to forget” and “use it or lose it” society. If fitness and wine clubs, prescription refill plans, and fundraising pledges can all

...continued on Page 3

## Maximize the Effectiveness of Your Committees & Volunteers

Throughout various occupations and I’m sure generations upon generations, one community trait that holds up anywhere is that “there are too many cooks in the kitchen.” Many times, I’ve been to meetings where there are too many “cooks,” and the only thing that gets done is talking. Likewise, I’ve been to meetings where there are nothing but “waiters,” and everyone wants to do something, but there is no leader to set a direction, which ends up with the same result.

The trick, of course, is to have committees balanced with members. Taking the time to form a strong relationship with committee leaders will pay dividends beyond your wildest dreams. Setting goals together and clarifying expectations into manageable chunks will make tasks easy for leaders to delegate and follow through.

Although not an official “job,” I’ve found that committee descriptions, much like job descriptions, cut down on committees meandering and helps focus them on the tasks at hand. Likewise, a volunteer description can be just as helpful. We all have events that can require several volunteers, and having a clearly defined description that you (or a committee leader) can hand a volunteer cuts down on both time and miscommunication. There are plenty of people willing to volunteer, but volunteers get turned off by sloppy communication and a feeling of being unappreciated.

*Chad Stearns*  
Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce

## 2011 Public Policy Priorities

Advocating for business-friendly tax policies that promote economic growth, a constitutional amendment to allow the state to target its education dollars and ending further cost-shifting to the business community from the Medicaid program top the list of the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire's public policy priorities. The organization recently released its 2011 public policy initiatives, which also include issues such as energy costs, labor rules and regulations, workforce development and others. The BIA's 2011 public policy priorities include:

**PRIORITY:** The BIA believes fiscally conservative state budgets with a business-friendly tax structure are an important part of the New Hampshire Advantage. Action steps include:

- Oppose an income or sales tax
- Oppose any increase in the BET or BPT
- Support efforts to pass a constitutional amendment to allow the state to target education aid
- Support efforts to reform New Hampshire's public employee retirement system that address and reduce the significant unfunded liability of the fund
- Encourage business leaders to identify and share opportunities for improving efficiencies in the state

**PRIORITY:** The BIA supports business tax incentives that foster economic growth. Action steps include:

- Oppose a reduction in, repeal of or suspension of the BET credit against the BPT
- Oppose any efforts to reduce or repeal research and development tax credits
- Support efforts to improve net operating loss carry-forward provisions
- Ensure that efforts to define reasonable compensation as a deduction against the business profits tax will not adversely affect New Hampshire's business climate
- Support continued state investment in community development tax credits

**PRIORITY:** The BIA supports infrastructure development. Action steps include:

- Transportation – Advocate for investment in public transportation systems, including rail and air travel, as well as New Hampshire's road and bridge network, and support efforts to increase federal transportation aid to the state
- Water/Sewer – Educate policy leaders and the public about water and waste water treatment systems that are at the end of their design life and/or exceeding capacity

**PRIORITY:** The BIA supports efforts that increase the availability and affordability of housing for working people. Action steps include:

- Oppose any efforts to roll back or repeal core principles of SB 342 (2008 workforce housing legislation)
- Increase awareness of the issue through workshops, forums and publicity, and encourage BIA members and chamber partners to become more engaged in workforce housing issues at the local level

**PRIORITY:** The BIA supports fair and balanced labor rules and regulations that carefully consider the rights and responsibilities of workers and management. Action step:

- The BIA will oppose any effort to undermine a worker's fundamental right to a secret ballot when voting on union representation and will oppose any proposal seeking to impose mandatory binding arbitration on negotiations between employer groups and unions regarding wages, benefits and other conditions of employment

**PRIORITY:** The BIA supports efforts that enhance outcomes and reduce/slow the growth of total healthcare costs for employers and the state. Action steps include:

- Oppose new or expanded healthcare benefit mandates
- Support adequate Medicaid reimbursements to healthcare providers to reduce cost-shifting to the business community
- Review and evaluate cost-effective ways to provide health care to the uninsured and underinsured to reduce cost-shifting to the business community from uncompensated care
- Support efforts to promote better health in the workplace
- Support healthcare reform that lowers costs, improves access and results in better outcomes

**PRIORITY:** The BIA supports efforts to develop New Hampshire's future workforce. Action step:

- Support initiatives to improve job readiness skills for a multi-generational workforce; recruit, retain and train younger workers; recognize the abilities and talents of legal immigrants and refugees; and prepare the labor force for 21st-century occupations

**PRIORITY:** The BIA will continue to support environmental policies, legislation and administrative rules that balance economic development with the long-term viability of the state's natural resources. Action steps include:

- Support Department of Environmental Services (DES) initiatives to streamline and expedite permitting process
- Foster discussions on how DES is funded, focusing on the appropriate allocation of the state's fees and taxes
- Support only balanced environmental fees to fund necessary state programs that do not inappropriately target any one sector of the population or economy
- Advocate for increased transparency and effective use of state environmental fees
- Advocate for greater incentives for private sector environmental stewardship and sustainability
- Support balanced state and federal policies regarding wetlands protection and waste water discharge
- Focus on the state's role in balancing the availability and use of water resources

**PRIORITY:** The BIA will continue to work towards mitigating the rising cost of energy. Action steps include:

- Oppose diversions of dedicated funds, which are aimed at the promotion and proliferation of energy efficiency, conservation and sustainable energy resources, for purposes unrelated to energy efficiency and the promotion of alternative energy sources
- Support proportional disbursements of energy efficiency and sustainable energy funds to all energy consumers, based on energy usage and the amount each consumer sector pays into the fund
- Support initiatives and policies that leverage regional strengths, including the development of affordable renewable

*Public Policy...continued from Page 3*

energy resources

- Lead and support efforts to educate businesses and elected officials, and participate in the education of consumers about energy efficiency, conservation, thermal energy savings potential, electricity supply and distribution
- Help members explore competitive supply options, renewable technologies, distributed energy resources and purchaser aggregation
- Participate in state commissions, committees, proceedings, and boards, which focus on long-term energy planning, and advocate for greater affordability, reliability, fuel diversification and energy efficiency

**PRIORITY:** The BIA will support efforts to expand telecommunications infrastructure throughout the state to improve access and reliability. Action step:

- Participate in proceedings at commissions, committees and boards that focus on the further development of telecommunications infrastructure

*Adrienne Rupp*

*Business and Industry Association*

## **Hail & Farewell!**

Chris Bolan Executive Director of the Waterville Valley Chamber of Commerce has left his position of 12 years to return to the Valley. Chris began his career with the Chamber in 1998 and in his tenure doubled the size of the chamber, suffered through some tough economic times, and rose to the top as one of the most popular individuals in Waterville.

Chris came to the Chamber from his position of Sales Manager at Valley Inn, now returns to the Valley working for the Sununu Family who recently purchased the ski area and the Village Square.

Chris is the father of four and if you watch re-runs of *SURVIVOR* the Samoa Show you can see his wife as one of the participants. We wish Chris well and you can keep in contact with him at his e-mail [cbolan54@gmail.com](mailto:cbolan54@gmail.com).

*Paul Boucher*

*Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce*

*10 Tips...continued from Page 1*

take place with an initial consent to charge our credit cards, why can't we do it for membership dues? Offer members the ability to pay their dues on a pre-defined term and cancellations can occur with a minimum of 30 days written notice. If the transaction occurs monthly or quarterly, members may not question the "value" of membership since they only see an incremental cost each time.

6) Use a touch plan to reach out to members on a meaningful basis—A "touch plan" is a pre-designed template of interactions that is implemented over a period of time. For instance, you can employ a 1st Year Member Touch Plan that includes a welcome letter, orientation invitation, mid-year survey and face-to-face visit. Some "touches" may be virtual while others require time invested for staff and volunteers.

7) Increase engagement levels through multiple platforms—Studies show that higher levels of engagement result in higher renewal rates. Engagement is more than attending events—it includes open rates on e-mails, response to feedback mechanisms, interactions on social media or list serves, and volunteer participation. Make a point of having staff and volunteers post on members' Facebook pages, and start and respond to conversational threads among members. Contact members who are not highly engaged and find out why. Some members may enjoy being observers and not have a high need to interact with other members to receive value.

8) Realign your programs and services with members' changing needs—Take the time to seriously evaluate what you offer, the real usage rates by members, and gain feedback from members on how to enhance their benefits. Use a rating system to determine how well each program and service aligns with the mission, its real costs (time, staff and financial resources) to provide, its ROI for the organization, and how many unique members are being served. Create task forces of members to provide key insights on current and emerging needs and don't be afraid to "kill the sacred cows" that no longer serve the members or the organization.

9) Target members with specific benefits based on past behavior or current preferences—Amazon has perfected this strategy by using its membership software to monitor, track and target offerings based on customer demand. Depending on what you purchased over the last couple of years, which products you clicked on and the length of time you viewed specific web pages, and the items on your Wish List, Amazon targets you with similar opportunities. Consider allowing members to indicate their preferences on their profiles and use these "tags" to send them special offers. Monitor member activity and learn who's interested in what and target accordingly.

10) Develop a real retention plan—A retention plan shouldn't be reactive tasks based on delinquent renewals. A real retention plan involves identifying trends, setting goals, developing strategies and tactics, and dedicating resources to implementing and managing the plan.

I hope these tips help you increase your membership renewal rates for the this year.

*Cathi Hight, The Retention Specialist*  
©2010 Hight Performance Group, Inc.  
*Reprinted with permission*

## ***The Gazette in Print!***

The Board of Directors of the New Hampshire Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives recently agreed to continue publishing a print version of the quarterly NHACCE Gazette to supplement the email version.

The board feels that printed newsletters are often more useful than email-only newsletters, if for no other reason than printed newsletters are usually more portable and therefore more accessible. As the only regularly scheduled communication of the association, the board hopes the print version of the Gazette will enhance readership.

We would appreciate any feedback on the printed version. Jim Roche:224-5388, ext. 111 or Beth Maltzie: [bmaltzie@gmail.com](mailto:bmaltzie@gmail.com).

**CALENDAR of EVENTS****Jan. 13,  
Feb. 16 &  
March 16****Raising the Bar on Your Financial Management**

A series on Basic Fiscal Practices. These programs will focus on strengthening your capacity to develop meaningful budgets and relevant financial statements that allow you and your board to clearly understand your organization's fiscal status and strategize for the future. Where: Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce, 69 Route 101A, Amherst. Time: 9am–12pm. Cost per session: \$45 members; \$90 non-members. Contact: May Balsama, Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce 673-4360 or register online at: [www.souhegan.net](http://www.souhegan.net).

**May 16-20****Green Commute Week**

Coincides with National Bike to Work Day. Encourage people to carpool, bicycle walk and use public transportation whenever possible. Chambers and members are invited to help plan and promote these events. Contact: Nik Coates at [ncoates@cnhrpc.org](mailto:ncoates@cnhrpc.org) or 226-6020.

**This Spring! NHACCE Spring Conference**

Watch for more details.

**SAVE THE DATE!****Aug. 3-6 American Chamber of Commerce Executives 2011 Conference**

Where: Los Angeles, CA

Mark your calendar and watch for more details!

**We welcome contributions from chamber executives! Editorials, articles or writing requests may be submitted by contacting Beth Maltzie via e-mail: [bmaltzie@gmail.com](mailto:bmaltzie@gmail.com).**

**2011 Board  
of Directors**

President  
**Jim Roche**  
BIA

Mary DeVries  
Vice President  
Wolfeboro

Treasurer  
**Tim Sink**  
Concord

Secretary  
**Rob Bryant**  
Lake Sunapee

Director  
**Mark LaClaire**  
Lincoln-Woodstock

Director  
**Donna Morris**  
Salem

Director  
**Mike Schidlovsky**  
Exeter

***Chambers & Members Invited to Participate!***

One of the most cost-effective options for businesses to save in hiring and training costs is to implement an employer-provided transportation benefits program. Regional planning commissions and similar organizations help businesses implement such programs. These organizations are also planning Green Commute Week to bring greater awareness to transportation benefits. Green Commute Week is May 16-20 (see above calendar of events).