

Results of Membership Sessions

Question: 1. What are societies doing that are effective and/or working well?

New Member events, marketing

Beginning genealogy training

Study groups that offer help with brick walls

Having lock-ins with door prizes and free memberships

Offer virtual seminars and meetings and now out of town members are able to join meetings

Meeting host to invite people to join the society

Showcase a community person and do their genealogy tree and create the event as a fundraiser

Opened up emails and meetings to non-members as well

Switch to Zoom; nationally known speakers; grow memberships

Online exhibit hall brings in members

Dangle the carrot; attend 2 (free) then decide if you want to join

Also consider some events that are not member-only

Prospective member list

Genealogy Fair to build potential members and to help people

Current and Past Members

Offers a special perk for the first people to renew their membership via a drawing

Society has a monthly lunch meeting (people pay for their own) and invite people to join and often get new members

Consider experience - if too large, it may not be what you want to deliver; hence a members-only event

Reaching out to past members

Survey members to determine what they want

Value to have recorded sessions for members

Restarted telephone group to call and check in with members

Thank you gifts to retain

Demonstrate that you care!

Fun thing to do during the meeting, raffle or gift cards?

Social Media

Advertise on Facebook and other Social Media

Posting on FB with articles on presenters to pages and to personal page

Posting on Twitter/orth social Media

Making FB group public

Good Web Presence

Link on website to join society mailing list to receive announcements

Marketing

Advertise at the library using brochures - what other locations might be right?

Local community newspapers, post meetings and write articles about presentations

Sent email to dAR group and got new members

On anniversary, invite members to bring genealogical picture and do show and tell

Anniversary event in quarterly or call Stirpes for announcement

Surprise Meeting - bring a local celeb to a meeting (offer free DNA test) and tell the story; get news coverage

Other ideas

Vetting board candidates

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Question: 2. What things are societies doing poorly (or not doing at all)?

Prospective Member Problems

Closed meeting for members only
Not keeping a list of potential members
Not following up on visitor list
Not having ability to pay membership online
No recruiting younger members
Society does not follow up on visitors who do not join.
Not previously as welcoming or inviting
Societies have no formal plans for membership drives.
Society might recognize a visitor from the longest distance away.

Current Member/Board Problems

Board entrenchment
Not enough people for all of the jobs
Meeting times are not a good time for different generations
Societies are not responding to people who have technical issues with virtual programs
Haven't been virtual and so are extending membership for another year
Need to rejuvenate
Don't delegate mostly due to lack of volunteers
Members not engaged when we went online
- they run the risk of becoming invisible

Marketing

Not participating in social media
Not making FB group public limits attention to meetings
Not reaching out to other organizations to publicize

One Society's story

Prior to Pandemic met at library/museum
- librarian moved
- relationship dwindled
- consider a formal board position for retention
- try to get on the schedule a year at a time "stay on their radar"

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Question: 3. What additional resources do societies need to be more successful?

Marketing

Cross-posting in different societies on FB and social media platforms.

Help with advertising templates and review of brochure. Maybe include a younger person's input to the brochure.

Help attracting more diverse membership.

Better ideas to broader reach

- People don't read newspapers anymore

Ext: Boost FB post

Take mailing list sign up - clip board to other organizations where you speak for those that might be interested

Get active on social media

Technology resources

Apps such as square and paypal

Use Easy Net Sites, dynamic and updated websites

Amazon simple-affiliate links

Provide training to hold in person and virtual meetings - the technology and hardware issues.

Connections needing to be made

Reach out to the schools

Seek volunteers including Mormon missionaries, interns

Final Thoughts

Today's meeting is giving people a lot of great ideas - and having it virtually several times a year is encouraged.

More help with engaging younger people to join (help with social media platforms)

Brownbag meeting

Training & Education on effective ways to do surveys

Survey - How did you hear about our group?

How do you differentiate your society & experience

Interact with visitors and make them feel welcome

Need to make visitors more welcome, visitor packet or phone call/email

How do we find the time?

How do we find the volunteers?