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Innovative Methods for Engaging Online Chapter Members

Rebecca Norman-Eck, MSN, RN
School of Nursing, SUNY Delhi, Delhi, NY, USA

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Chapters whose membership are primarily comprised of remotely dispersed members have unique challenges with participation and developing a sense of community necessary for chapter growth. As a newly formed chapter developing our first strategic plan, membership retention became an area of focus for the growth and ongoing success of our small, rural chapter. Members must value the benefits offered by an organization or they will not accept invitations for membership or renew existing memberships (Eyun-Jung & Yuan, 2016). Walton (2017) found the primary factors associated with membership recruitment and retention included education, cost, professional development, and networking. Additional findings showed that members analyze the value associated with membership, recommending communication of the benefits of engagement as an important factor when recruiting and retaining members in professional nursing organizations (Walton, 2017). According found Ki (2018), member attitude was one key factor in membership reneal and recommendation to others. Hager (2014) found that members who value the organization are more apt to engage and volunteer in these instances. Our chapter concluded that member retention takes place when members value the organization, and value occurs, in part, with active chapter engagement.

Organizational value begins with communication and is an integral element for member engagement and retention. According to Coburn (2012), almost 60% of renewing members of Sigma indicated that chapter communication played a part in their decision to renew their membership. Markova et al. (2013) found a positive correlation between dissemination of organization materials and retention of members. Our chapter knew that we had to find innovative ways to engage our members and develop a sense of community or we would not retain them. Technology provides unique opportunities to communicate, connect and engage with these members who otherwise could not be active chapter participants. The Circle, social media websites, and dissemination of electronic resources by mass email distribution are just a few forms of technology that can be utilized to facilitate this outreach and connection. This presentation will focus on strategies chapters can implement to remotely engage members, develop a sense of community, and professionally network, using available technology.

Title:
Innovative Methods for Engaging Online Chapter Members

Keywords:
Innovative Strategies, Membership recruitment and retention and Online Member Engagement

References:
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Abstract Summary:
This presentation will focus on strategies online chapters can implement to remotely engage members, develop a sense of community, and professionally network, using technology to bridge the gap for members who otherwise would not be able to participate.

Content Outline:

1. **Introduction**
2. Definition of terms

- Engagement
- Value
- Member retention

1. Growth of a chapter is dependent upon membership retention

- Online membership presents unique challenges and innovative strategies for connecting members and developing a sense of community
- Chapter strategic planning after membership survey

1. **Body of the Presentation**
2. Key Points:
3. Value in membership drives retention
    1. Members must value the benefits offered by an organization or they will not accept membership invitations or renew existing memberships (Eyun-Jung & Yuan, 2016).
    2. Walton (2017) reports primary factors associated with valuing membership; Recommends communication of the benefits of engagement as an important factor when recruiting and retaining members in professional nursing organizations
        - education
        - cost
        - professional development
        - networking

1. Hager (2014) found members who value the organization are more apt to engage and volunteer in these instances.

2. Establishing value through engagement of members
    1. Strategies for engaging online chapter members

- The Circle

    - Founder’s Day Volunteer challenge in communities of member locale
    - Discussions
    - Member spotlights
    - Event notifications
    - Profile updates
    - Using photographs
- Online Coffee Chats facilitated by members
- Web conferencing: Skype, Zoom, Adobe
- Newsletters highlighting chapter members and accomplishments
- Combined online and in person membership induction ceremonies
- Facebook (including a push)

III. **Conclusion**

Discussion of final thoughts on the effectiveness of the strategies we have implemented to engage membership, thereby creating chapter value and sustainability.

First Primary Presenting Author
Primary Presenting Author
Rebecca Norman-Eck, MSN, RN
SUNY Delhi
School of Nursing
Associate Professor
Delhi NY
USA

Professional Experience: Chapter President, Chi Tau 2016-2018 Education 2005 Masters in Nursing Education Duke University 1995 Bachelor of Science in Nursing University of South Carolina 1989 Bachelor of Arts in Psychology Western Connecticut State University Additional training 2011 Forensic Nurse Examiner training 2002 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner training Employment History SUNY - Delhi Delhi, New York Associate Professor September 2014 - present Assistant Professor October 2011 – 2014 Midlands Technical College Columbia, South Carolina Adjunct Clinical Faculty August 2012 – present Clinical instructor for ADN nursing students in the OB and psychiatric settings. Nurse Educator January 2003-December 2010 Adjunct Clinical Faculty August 2001- December 2002
Author Summary: Rebecca Eck is currently a tenured FT faculty member at SUNY Delhi in the RN-BSN program, an adjunct faculty member for Midlands Technical College. She graduated with her Master's in Nursing Education from Duke University in 2005. Her specialty areas include women's health, forensics and psychiatric nursing.