



Retention, Recruitment, Reactivation Best Practices Report

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

In October 2004, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) surveyed district, section and chapter (chapter) elected leaders to assess current activities related to retention, recruitment and reactivation (3R) of its membership and to identify “best practices” in those areas.

The survey sought information regarding how and if chapters institute retention activities, implement specific membership growth goals and recruitment strategies and use ITE membership resources and marketing materials. This report provides an overview of those best practices.

CREATE 3R INFRASTRUCTURE

Establishing an infrastructure to support 3R activities is fundamental for all chapters. The creation of a membership chair and committee also is essential. If these positions are already established and focused primarily on maintaining the chapter roster and other administrative tasks, an expansion of that role should be considered. 3R activities are crucial to maintaining the long-term viability of ITE chapters and the organization as a whole. The establishment and evolving role of the membership chair and its committee activities demonstrate that chapter leadership is focused on providing the best membership services and on bringing in new members to share in those benefits.

The role of the committee is to create a goal and vision for the chapter’s 3R activities.

Establish Membership Goals

Establishing membership retention and growth goals gives purpose to membership committee activities. Some chapters have established numeric growth goals—25 new members in one year—while others have established percentage growth goals.

- To ensure achievement of goals, districts can provide membership awards to the top one or two sections that have the greatest percentage growth or retention during a calendar year.

Develop and Distribute Resources

Resources from ITE headquarters are always available for chapter meetings and 3R outreach, including general membership brochures/applications, affiliated agency membership brochures/applications, the ITE membership advantage program, council membership brochures/applications as well as Technical Conference and Annual Meeting and Exhibit marketing pieces. These materials should be used along with any special membership promotional materials provided by ITE headquarters. Contact Heather Talbert, Chapter Services Associate (htalbert@ite.org), to request materials.

Create/Use Chapter Resources and Materials

Surveyed chapters indicated that the chapter newsletter and other chapter-specific resources are used for membership 3R. Newsletters are an important tool for sharing information and recruiting new members.

- Use current and/or old newsletters:
 - as a recruitment tool;
 - to create interest with prospective members and to welcome new members; and
 - to distribute at events.
- Develop a one-page flyer or brochure highlighting the benefits of joining an individual chapter—distribute at meetings and with membership application mailings.

RETENTION

An important part of retaining membership is ensuring that dues are renewed. This entails proactive targeted outreach to contact members whose dues are in arrears and to maintain accurate address and contact information.

Each summer, ITE distributes a list of members whose current year's dues are in arrears to section presidents with copies sent to district chairs and district directors on the International Board of Direction. This effort is made so that personal outreach can be made to individual members to encourage dues payment and/or renewal.

Outreach to Members in Arrears

- Engage a current member who works closely with the person and task him/her with follow-up; for more remote contacts, send a general membership brochure/application.
- Make a quarterly report to ITE Headquarters concerning status of members and affiliates. Reports should be sent to Wendy Leyes, ITE Membership Manager (wleyes@ite.org).
- Annually review the membership roster to see who should be encouraged to upgrade to ITE international membership.

RECRUITMENT

While one goal is to retain current membership, another is to recruit new members. Bringing new members into the fold enhances the ITE experience for all by providing fresh perspectives on transportation topics and sharing technical expertise and membership knowledge with a wide range of transportation professionals.

Create a Prospective Member Lists

Who are prospective members?

- Colleagues (private sector, state and local agencies and university professors)
- Employees (young professionals and those needing professional development)
- Rising stars in organizations
- Soon-to-graduate university students
- Non-member meeting attendees
- Retirees
- Affiliates

Outreach to Prospective Members

To maximize recruitment efforts, prospective members are contacted in a number of ways. As the outreach mechanisms are developed, needs of prospective members and how they can be met by ITE should be considered.

- Develop a relationship with your prospective member. Talk about why you joined ITE and what you consider to be the professional and personal benefits of ITE membership.
- Deliver ITE's message. Share copies of ITE publications (e.g., local newsletters, *ITE Journal*, council newsletters) with your prospective member and talk about ITE's other benefits, including technical products, professional development opportunities, networking opportunities and the technical conferences and annual meetings.
- Make it easy for the prospect member to join. Have a membership application available and offer to mail it for the person.
- Offer open invitations to meetings or issue invitations to meetings when a high-profile speaker is presenting.
- Develop a list of organizations (public/private) along with key contacts (champion) for each one. Reach out to those champions to push the ITE membership cause.
- “Bring a Member Raffle”—Encourage members to bring a non-member to a meeting. Place cards of each sponsor in a bowl. Pick a card at the end of the event. The winner and guest(s) win back the fee paid for the member and guest to attend the meeting.
- Set up a chapter booth at district meetings.
- Establish special group rates for agencies.

Target Outreach to Encourage Transition from Student to Full Members

Soon-to-be-graduates of local universities are prime prospects for ITE membership. To encourage transition from student to full members, be proactive:

- Hold chapter meetings at university sites;
- Provide ITE technical presentations to students; and
- Waive registration for student members to participate in chapter meetings.

REACTIVATION

Members leave ITE for varying reasons, including loss of dues reimbursement from employer; retirement; home and work schedules; non-receipt of dues bill because of change of address; general expense; perceived limited benefits; or because they simply forgot to renew. It is worth following up with all those who do not renew dues. A simple reminder may be all that is needed. However, some have left the ITE family for a reason. As such, these former members' needs must be identified and matched appropriately with ITE services and benefits. Many of the strategies implemented for dealing with members in arrears and recruitment can be used to reactivate former members.

FOLLOW UP...FOLLOW UP...FOLLOW UP

For all retention, recruitment and reactivation activities, follow up is the key to success.

- Use a spreadsheet to manage contacts and follow up.
- Monitor follow-up activities and use the time to verify contact/address information. Results should be reported to Wendy Leyes, ITE Membership Manager (wleyes@ite.org).
- Share successful retention, recruitment and reactivation campaign results with ITE staff also share this information with Heather Talbert (htalbert@ite.org). Your success stories can be added to ITE's Elected Leadership Listserv and/or E-library.

MAINTAINING AND BUILDING A STRONG ITE MEMBERSHIP

The activities described in this report represent the best practices of ITE chapters' recruitment, retention and reactivation efforts. These practices are being shared so that chapter leaders may use the ideas and customize their activities to meet the individual needs of their respective regions. A concerted effort by elected leaders in this area ensures that ITE remains the transportation professional's gateway to knowledge and advancement.