



Holstein Association USA - Inviting New Members

Ideas to help you with recruitment!

Holstein Association USA, Inc. is here to help in your membership recruitment efforts.

We have new resources available that highlight membership benefits, including a PowerPoint presentation and fliers. Membership applications and the Holstein Pulse are always available at www.holstein.com. If you are looking for more ideas or would like assistance acquiring or developing materials, contact Jodi Hoynoski, phone 800.952.5200 ext. 4261 or e-mail jhoynoski@holstein.com.

Idea #1: Form a Membership Committee to help recruit, engage and retain members.

Action Steps:

- Utilize a diverse cross section of current membership. Including some board members to keep the committee and board closely connected.
- Develop specific, measurable goals and detailed action plans you will use to achieve the goals.
- Develop a "Membership Recruitment Packet." Include membership applications (state & national), membership benefits brochures (state & national), a calendar of events, a list of board members with their contact information, your state publication and the Holstein Pulse.
- Assemble a subcommittee that focuses solely on new members, to make them feel welcome.
 - Conduct orientation activities, or a casual new member social. A committee member could even take a new member out for coffee, one-on-one.
 - Charge the committee with honing in on each individual new member's interests to introduce and involve them in association activities.

Idea #2: Hold a "Recruitment Night" to interest prospective members.

Action Steps:

- Consider teaming up with a neighboring county association.
- Choose a date, time and location that is convenient for prospective members. Poll some of your prospects to get a feel for what might work best for them.
- Feel free to get creative. It doesn't have to be at night and doesn't have to include a formal sit-down dinner. Consider a potluck, barbeque, family fun day, or an informal appetizer and drinks reception. If it is young members you are targeting, host a college & career day.
- Develop an agenda or timeline for the event.
- Ask current members to bring along least one guest that is a prospective member.
- Develop a comprehensive "Informational Kit" that includes a personalized invitation letter, an agenda for the event, any promotional brochures and videos about the association, and a membership application.
- Invite local media to cover the event, and send press releases leading up to and following the event.
- Pay attention to details such as providing nametags and ensuring food and beverage and audiovisual needs are met.
- Have current members help with registration, serve as greeters, and work the crowd. Focus on making guests feel welcome.
- Make a presentation about the association, focusing on benefits of membership. Audiovisual presentations, such as videos or PowerPoints, do make an impact.
- Give attendees a questionnaire to complete before they leave. Ask them to rate the event, and gauge their interest in membership.
- After the local event, personally invite prospects to attend another regional or state event or meeting with you.

Idea #3: Hold an informational series of meetings to continually surface potential new members.

Action Steps:

- Every other month, hold an educational seminar featuring a timely topic and well-known speaker.
- Select topics that focus on a target demographic group, such as young adults, couples, families or women.
- Encourage members to invite guests.
- Include association and membership information in the program agenda.
- Hold an idea exchange after the presentation. This can be an informal discussion, broken into smaller groups if need be, to talk about how to put ideas into action on the given topic.
- Promote the meetings in targeted media venues and on your website. Send an e-mail to members promoting upcoming programs and include biographical information about guest speakers.
- Continually invite non-members, and encourage them to join.

Idea #4: Conduct a classic Membership Drive to gain new members.

Action Steps:

- Form a Membership Drive Committee.
- Make an effort to increase public relations about the association.
- Consider developing a theme. It can make every event more fun and exciting while escalating the energy level for members and prospects. Tie it into all communications and events.
- Develop support materials and train committee members to consistently articulate membership benefits.
- Make it easy to join. Review your membership application and process.
- Create a detailed timeline and specific membership goals and communicate them with the association board and membership.
- Create a prospect list. Rate each individual and rank a list of priority prospects.
- Make individual contact with prospects.
- Hold a special meeting or event where invitees can learn more about the association and membership benefits. (See Idea #2)
- Have current board members follow-up with prospects for an informal, one-on-one get-together.
- Ask prospect to join! Realize not everyone will say yes. Don't become discouraged and keep asking.
- Provide incentives or perks for successful recruiters.
- Track where new memberships are coming from. Have some sort of code or section on the application for them to say why they joined. That way you'll really know what recruitment efforts are working.

Idea #5: Competition can yield new members and is a fun way to engage and unite current members.

Action Steps:

- Divide your current membership into teams. Team members earn points for their recruitment efforts
 - 1 point = bringing a prospective member to an event
 - 2 points = submitting/recommending a new member
 - 3 points = each additional new member above 3 successful recruits
- Provide prizes as an incentive that can be as simple as free membership for the next year, or reduced ticket price to an event.
- Introduce new members at an event and have the team that recruited them stand with them to further emphasize the team spirit.

Ideas to Retain Members

Recognizing the first year is critical...

- Send a thank you note to new members for joining. This could even be an e-mail message.
- Develop a new member "Welcome Packet." Include a personalized welcome letter, calendar of events, list of board members with their contact info, your state publication and the Holstein Pulse.
- List new members on your website.
- Establish a member-mentoring plan. Assign each new member a current member as his or her mentor.
- At events, indicate "board member" or "new member" on nametags. Ask board members to get to know new members.
- Ask new members to serve as greeters at a meeting so they get to know all the members.
- Ask new members where their interests lie, and get them signed up on a committee as soon as possible. Once a person joins, it is very important to keep them engaged to find value in their membership.
- Make an effort to communicate personally with new members at least four times during their first year.
- Set-up an e-mail list, social media network or special section of your website for first-year members.

...and keeping them.

- Include "Networking Tips" in a newsletter or welcome packet, or send it to pre-registered attendees before an event. Networking is often a primary reason for joining, and is an important and inexpensive membership benefit to provide.
- Gather testimonials from inactive members. This opens communication with those individuals and can identify opportunities your association is missing. Try to catch them before they become a former member.
- Conduct focus groups by phone, or have breakouts during a meeting, with different segments of current membership (new members, female members). Take note of their comments, but also who is making them.
- Give an incentive, or have a prize drawing, for early membership renewals.
- Acknowledge members at milestones. Congratulate and thank them at 1, 5, 10, 25 membership year marks.
- Communicate with members regularly. With Internet, e-mail and social media, inexpensive and easy ways exist to keep communication lines open.
- Survey the membership regularly to gather feedback.
- Publish names and contact information for board members to encourage members to contact them with any questions or concerns.
- Keep an up-to-date calendar of events on your website and in your publications. Share it with others that can help promote events to non-members.
- Develop a membership retention plan and specific goals. Communicate them with membership.
- Institute a thank you column in your newsletter or magazine to recognize members for their leadership and involvement.
- Give members points for participating in an activity or volunteering to help with a meeting, like frequent flier miles. Make a fun contest out of it to keep current members engaged.
- Don't let your association's activities, fundraisers, meetings and shows become stale. Periodically, try something new.
- Become more community minded and try organizing a charity event or effort. Members that might not be thrilled about attending "another meeting" might be excited to give back, and have some fun in the meantime.
- Look at your awards. Are your recognition areas in sync with the goals of the organization? If increased membership, and engaging members are goals, how will you reward and acknowledge those responsible? Find unique ways to give recognition to more individuals.
- Keep up to date contact information for all members.
- Have "Join" and "Renew" buttons on your website homepage.
- If charging for events, consider two-tiered pricing for members and non-members. By offering non-member event pricing equivalent to or more than the cost of annual membership plus the member rate, associations can encourage membership.
- Send ceased members a personalized "We Want You Back" letter.

For more membership resources, visit.....

www.holsteinusa.com

Holstein Association USA, Inc.

**1 Holstein Place, PO Box 808
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0808**

800.952.5200