Reinforcing the Personal Connection and Value of Membership: Implementing a Holistic Renewal Communications Cycle

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Re-envisioning the Member Renewal Cycle

**Our Goal:**
Provide an exceptional membership experience

**Our Strategy:**
Increase the size and engagement of membership

**Our Tactic:**
Track, assess, monitor, and improve member communications and interaction throughout the entire lifecycle

**The Numbers:**
- Industry benchmark for median renewal rate of associations = 84%
- Average rates for ARMA in the last seven years: High = 74%, Low = 66%
- Plan to increase touchpoints will help us get closer to industry benchmarks
- This will also cause an increase in members’ average tenure
Why do we need a personalized approach?

- Focus on the member’s perspective: renewing is a *personal* experience and decision.
- Messaging that “speaks” to the members and reinforces their importance to ARMA through a personal and powerful connection will:
  - Serve as a reminder of the benefits we bring to the member’s personal and professional lives
  - Empower the member and their decision to renew
  - Convey our appreciation in a sincere manner for their commitment and support of ARMA
- Conversational tone makes the renewal enjoyable and not just a business transaction
- FACT: The decision to renew is not made with just the receipt of an invoice.
Renewal Communications 101

- Effective renewal communication cycles take place over more than a few months
  - The majority of associations (36%) start the renewal cycle 90 days before the expiration date
  - A large number stop the renewal cycle at 2-3 months after expiration.
  - Associations with a renewal rate of 80% or higher offer grace periods for an average of 2-3 months

- Institute a full plan with multiple touch points that can be executed but that will not oversaturate

- Use diverse methods and mediums of communication with a personal touch
  - The three most popular in order: email, direct mail, and outreach calls
  - FACT: Associations with the highest renewal rates use phone calls as part of the process
  - Email generates the most renewals, followed by direct mail, staff calls, and peer member calls
Renewal Communications 101

- Unite and coordinate your renewal communications messaging
  - Recruitment, engagement, and HQ content

- Each touch point should be different but part of the same overall theme
  - Content primarily but can also include the look/design of direct mail and email

- Make the renewal process EASY!
  - Include simple instructions/directions on where and how to renew

- Ensure written notices have the same tone as a conversation and do not read like a sterile invoice
Renewal Communications 101

- Personalize the greeting with the member’s first name
- Connect personally and aim to build relationships
- Include a short list of highly impactful benefits and customize to the member
  - TIP: Brainstorm and identify a list of your chapter’s top benefits (ideally from member feedback)
- Do not forget to thank the member for their support and make them excited about the coming year!
- Automated email campaigns reduce time and improve tracking
- Evaluate after a set amount of time and redeploy
ARMA HQ Enhanced Cycle

- Expanded and revised communications cycle to personalize and energize

- Shifting to a more progressive cycle that includes:
  - An automated email campaign that includes seven (7) notices throughout the renewal window
  - A minimum of one (1) direct mail piece
  - A strategy to reach members by phone

- Highlights of new communications approach:
  - Utilizing a central theme but with varying content for each that aligns with our other messaging
  - Incorporated more “what have we/what can we do for you”
  - Included multiple calls to action to “Renew Today” and direct links and button to profile
  - Created and embedded a membership renewal justification letter template
ARMA HQ Renewal Cycle Outline

Notice 1
- Email sent 90 days before expiration date
- Includes link to justification letter

Notice 2A
- Email sent 60 days before expiration date

Notice 2B
- Letter sent 60 days before expiration date

Notice 3
- Email sent 30 days before expiration date
- Includes link to justification letter

Notice 4
- Postcard sent 15 days before expiration

Notice 5
- Email sent 1 day before expiration
- Includes link to justification letter

Notice 6
- Email sent 30 days after expiration

Notice 7
- Email sent 3 days prior to termination
Chapter Engagement and Collaboration

- Collaboration to include chapters in the HQ renewal process
  - Goal = Fully connect new members with their local chapter and increase retention rates
  - Future Goal = Learn about chapter member renewal outreach call process and how it can tie into both HQ and chapter campaigns to ensure a personal touch
  - Coordinated plan that enhances existing chapter renewal and retention efforts

- ACTION PLAN: Steps you can take as a Chapter Leader!
  - Use templates, samples, and guidance in this toolkit
  - Outline retention efforts with the board and review regularly during meetings
  - Use a current member roster list (always available for download at www arma org)
  - Reach out
Future Considerations and Enhancements

- Associations with renewal rates that are 80% or higher are more likely to offer renewal payment plans, such as monthly or quarterly.
- Associations that offer an early renewal discount or incentive are more likely to see an increase in renewal rates.
- Tune in and be sensitive to the top reasons why members do not renew and work to mitigate challenges:
  - Lack of engagement with the organization
  - Could not justify membership costs with value and ROI
  - Left the profession or retiring
  - Employer will not pay or stopped paying dues (HQ solution: renewal justification letter)
- Saving list of members that did not renew by termination to place into lapsed member campaign:
  - Postcard at 30 days after termination
  - Full development of automated campaign – fewer and less frequent touch points
Renewal Communications Toolkit

A complete package of tools are available at Chapter Central and include:

- Best practices and HQ overview presentation
- Renewal communications cycle timeline graphic
- Sample renewal notice content and template
- Renewal justification letter template
- Chapter Leader Action Plan
An engaged member is a RETAINED MEMBER!

Questions or Comments?