

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

# **Best Practices To Promote Section Membership**

2008



# Best Practices for Section Membership Development

## I. Develop a Membership Plan

Work with the NYSBA Membership Services Department and your staff liaison to develop a long-term plan aimed at increasing your Section membership.

Appoint a Section membership chair and charge membership chair with developing initiatives.

Establish a budget for membership development. If your Section has a surplus, consider investing surplus in membership initiatives such as networking receptions, meeting subsidies for new attorneys, first-time attendees, etc.

Review what your members want from New York State Bar Association Section membership, such as:

- Networking opportunities
- Meeting with judges or others with influence in their field
- Participation in CLEs
- Getting updates on developments in field
- Opportunities to develop credentials in their field

Develop a membership recruitment theme for your Section, such as: "Membership Is Everyone's Business"; "It's All about Membership"; "Membership, Membership, Membership."

Consider developing a membership challenge for your Executive Committee members, such as by asking them to enroll a new member in the Section or bring a new member to a meeting.

## II. Contact Potential and Existing Members


Work with the Membership Services Department to prepare a flyer listing the top ten reasons to join your Section.

Send out new member welcome letters.

Write letters to your target prospective members and follow up with calls and e-mails.

Write to all Section members to encourage them to join Section committees or fill committee vacancies.

Contact dropped Section members to encourage them to re-join.



Reach out to out-of-state and foreign lawyers who are not NYSBA members to encourage them to join your Section.

Recruit NYSBA members who are not already Section members, but who have a demonstrated interest in your Section's field of law (NYSBA's Membership Services Department can access these lists).

Go to firms and make presentations to substantive departments (e.g., litigation or trust and estates departments).

### **III. Use CLE Programs and Other Programs To Attract Members**

Make a pitch to join your Section at the start of each Section-sponsored CLE program.

Hold networking receptions following Section-sponsored CLE programs.

Hold free events as a member benefit, such as opportunities to meet judges or other individuals of note, and specifically welcome new members at these events.

Implement differential member pricing and charge Section members less for Section activities.

Use the Ambassador Program to welcome new members to Section programs.

Follow up with participants who attend Section events to invite them to join a Section committee or otherwise get involved in the Section.

### **IV. Expand Diversity of Section Membership**

Appoint a diversity chair charged with promoting membership to diverse groups.

At CLE programs, encourage speaker diversity.

Reach out to members of NYSBA's Committee on Minorities in the Profession.

Hold joint programs with minority bars, specialty bars and county bars.

Hold special diversity events.

Sponsor an internship for law students or section members of color.

Use conference calling/video conferences to make meetings more accessible.

Make Section programs accessible to government and public interest lawyers.

Make out-of-state and foreign lawyers who attend your programs feel welcome.

Hold regional events throughout the state.

### **V. Recruit Young Lawyers and Law Students**

Develop ways to attract law student members, such as holding panels at law schools or offering career days.

Develop programming attractive to young lawyers, such as CLE programs designed for introductory topics and for bridge-the-gap programming.



Enlist a Young Lawyer Section representative to join your Executive Committee.

Contact new attorneys who have a substantive interest in your Section field.

Consider pod casts by senior Section members that can be promoted to young lawyers.

Hold a young lawyers event targeted to those who are likely to join your Section.

Develop an electronic newsletter that can be targeted to tech-savvy young member.

Review your Website and make sure it is attractive to young members and that it contains up-to-date information.

Develop a list-serve or blog for your Section.

Consider a law student competition such as a writing competition and offer free Section membership to winners, as well as potentially other awards.

Enlist law school professors to speak at CLE programs and ask them to invite students in their classes to attend.

Establish a Young Lawyer Fellowship to encourage newly admitted lawyers to participate in your Section.

## VI. Use Your Section Website To Promote Membership

Review your Section Website and make sure it contains up-to-date information on your Section meetings, publications and events.

Appoint a Webmaster or communications committee to update and maintain Website on a timely basis and ensure it contains substantive information of interest.

Make your Section Executive Committee contact information available on your Section Website so that potential members can contact Section Officers.

Have a link to Top 10 reasons to join your Section on your Website.

Use your Section's Website to solicit members who want to become more involved in your Section or your Section's committees.

# Section Membership Development

**To help you develop and implement your membership program, contact:**



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