



## Use “Win-Back” Campaigns to Court Lost Members

How many dropped members do you have in the database? If you're like many associations, the number of dropped members exceeds your current membership base. Some drops are due to attrition beyond your control such as mergers and acquisitions, death of an owner, business relocation or failure. Most members dropped for other reasons and are viable prospects again. Have you thought about courting them to rejoin?

It's hard to say how many of your lost members you could successfully get to rejoin. Even if they would rejoin, do you really have the resources available to contact them and spend the time needed to win them back? Lost members are not valued equally and it is a mistake to assume that all dropped members are good prospects to win back.

Customer retention studies show that organizations can win-back up to 90% of lost customers if they are contacted, their issues are discussed and/or resolved, and there is interest in having them back. Smart organizations also realize that if happy customers are good advertising, then too many lost ones can be detrimental. Lost customers impact the bottom line and the ability to grow.

### Benefits of Win-Back Campaigns

There are several reasons why you should consider implementing win-back campaigns, including:

- You have past members' contact information available (unless they relocated or are no longer in business)
- You discover ways to improve on what you offer and the changes needed operationally from past members who share their not-so-positive experiences
- You re-establish a positive relationship with past members
- You can detect other at-risk members based on common factors
- You control the negative word-of-mouth impact from unhappy past members
- You get ideas about possible new programs or benefits from past members' suggestions
- You reap financial rewards for getting past members to rejoin

### Strategies for Successful Win-Back Campaigns

Even if you are challenged by limited resources (e.g., time, staff, and budget), you can employ these strategies at some level to focus on the members you want back the most.

- *Understand the real reasons why members don't renew*
  - Conduct exit interviews through calls, visits, or surveys (oftentimes they are more likely to speak with volunteers)
  - Listen to their concerns without judgment or defensiveness
- *Focus on quick win-back members*
  - Those you have a long-term standing relationship with personally
  - Those with easy-to-remedy solutions to regain their trust due to a miscommunication, oversight or price adjustment

- *Make members feel they are being re-approached with sincerity*
  - Contact them in a timely fashion (as soon as possible or within 30 days)
  - Thank them for their past membership and investments
  - Offer meaningful solutions to their concerns
- *Target dropped members with the highest Lifetime Values*
  - Run a Lifetime Value of Membership report on dropped members with Average Total Per Year values from descending-ascending order (or highest Total Revenue)
  - Remove all members due to natural attrition
  - Create a list of the top 20% of members for a win-back campaign (see *the sample report provided by Weblink.*)

## Lifetime Value of Membership

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**Dropped Members**

	Join Date	Drop Date	Years as Member	Dues Revenue	Other Revenue	Total Revenue	Avg. Dues Per Year	Avg. Other Per Year	Avg. Total Per Year
19377	11/24/2009	05/09/2011	1.5	\$28,000	\$80,325	\$108,325	\$19,247	\$55,214	\$74,461
1477	10/16/2009	08/16/2010	0.8	\$3,000	\$44,612	\$47,612	\$3,000	\$44,612	\$47,612
10941	02/01/2001	05/01/2003	2.2	\$0	\$99,387	\$99,387	\$0	\$44,293	\$44,293
17478	03/08/2010	03/01/2011	1.0	\$25,000	\$14,100	\$39,100	\$25,000	\$14,100	\$39,100
1548	10/04/2007	08/19/2009	1.9	\$10,600	\$39,042	\$49,642	\$5,648	\$20,803	\$26,452
6775	10/24/2007	06/02/2009	1.6	\$3,000	\$31,678	\$34,678	\$1,865	\$19,698	\$21,563
1008	07/30/2007	08/10/2010	3.0	\$12,500	\$48,160	\$60,660	\$4,121	\$15,879	\$20,001
9087	01/24/2002	11/29/2001	-0.2	\$0	\$15,324	\$15,324	\$0	\$15,324	\$15,324
2090	01/03/2006	07/27/2004	-1.4	\$750	\$13,467	\$14,217	\$750	\$13,467	\$14,217
4116	02/26/1999	03/05/2002	3.0	\$2,245	\$36,209	\$38,454	\$743	\$11,982	\$12,725
15326	09/28/2001	12/04/2002	1.2	\$9,955	\$5,045	\$15,000	\$8,411	\$4,263	\$12,674
9200	06/16/1999	07/18/2001	2.1	\$0	\$24,285	\$24,285	\$0	\$11,617	\$11,617
21260	03/23/2007	09/07/2010	3.5	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$40,000	\$8,663	\$2,888	\$11,551
11220	06/20/2002	10/14/2003	1.3	\$3,455	\$11,435	\$14,890	\$2,622	\$8,677	\$11,299
1075	05/06/2008	12/23/2009	1.6	\$5,250	\$13,052	\$18,302	\$3,215	\$7,993	\$11,208
11798	03/26/2009	08/19/2010	1.4	\$8,600	\$6,200	\$14,800	\$6,143	\$4,429	\$10,571
8240	10/30/1998	09/21/2001	2.9	\$0	\$25,980	\$25,980	\$0	\$8,971	\$8,971
60906	07/22/2008	07/08/2010	2.0	\$12,650	\$4,498	\$17,148	\$6,449	\$2,293	\$8,742
11479	10/01/2007	02/03/2010	2.3	\$20,000	\$25	\$20,025	\$8,528	\$11	\$8,539
11045	03/04/2009	09/13/2010	1.5	\$3,050	\$10,000	\$13,050	\$1,995	\$6,541	\$8,536
17540	12/10/2009	02/16/2011	1.2	\$10,000	\$20	\$10,020	\$8,430	\$17	\$8,446
73744	05/15/2009	08/05/2010	1.2	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$8,166	\$0	\$8,166
13872	09/16/2008	11/11/2009	1.2	\$2,188	\$7,191	\$9,379	\$1,897	\$6,234	\$8,131
2723	06/19/2009	11/08/2010	1.4	\$1,760	\$8,612	\$10,372	\$1,267	\$6,200	\$7,467
19873	05/02/2007	07/03/2008	1.2	\$4,000	\$4,637	\$8,637	\$3,411	\$3,954	\$7,366
5841	11/12/2001	10/14/2002	0.9	\$3,625	\$3,715	\$7,340	\$3,625	\$3,715	\$7,340
14029	07/05/2007	11/19/2008	1.4	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$7,256	\$0	\$7,256
60926	07/18/2008	12/18/2009	1.4	\$9,000	\$1,200	\$10,200	\$6,342	\$846	\$7,187
1408	02/19/2002	12/04/2002	0.8	\$3,500	\$3,657	\$7,157	\$3,500	\$3,657	\$7,157
18495	04/16/2007	05/21/2008	1.1	\$3,000	\$4,825	\$7,825	\$2,731	\$4,392	\$7,123
11482	06/07/2007	07/21/2009	2.1	\$10,000	\$4,950	\$14,950	\$4,710	\$2,331	\$7,041
64768	09/18/2009	04/04/2011	1.5	\$8,500	\$1,620	\$10,120	\$5,511	\$1,050	\$6,561
65537	02/04/2008	09/23/2009	1.6	\$10,000	\$450	\$10,450	\$6,114	\$275	\$6,389
3887	03/23/2001	02/21/2002	0.9	\$642	\$5,695	\$6,337	\$642	\$5,695	\$6,337
13496	12/22/2000	12/16/2002	2.0	\$671	\$11,645	\$12,316	\$338	\$5,871	\$6,209
8837	09/12/1998	04/30/2001	2.6	\$0	\$16,317	\$16,317	\$0	\$6,197	\$6,197

### Best Practices for Quick Win-Back Efforts

If members have dropped within the last 90 days, use these practices to win them back after contacting them successfully:

- Acknowledge their concerns
- Apologize for their poor experiences as members
- Assure them that specific problems will be addressed
- Offer them a generous remedy or solution to keep them as members

- Give them options to reinstate their memberships
- Ask them to reinstate their memberships for a period of time and agree on a re-evaluation date
- Be equally gracious whether they rejoin at this time or not
- If they don't agree to reinstate their membership, ask for permission to stay in touch with them
- Identify your next best opportunity to win back these members

### **Create a Long-Term Win-Back Campaign**

If you are unsuccessful in getting members you want back the most to rejoin, prepare to launch a long-term campaign to court them over the next one to two years. Here are suggestions for creating your plan:

**Step 1: *Maintain an updated list of lost members to target***

- Run a Lifetime Value of Membership report on dropped members annually
- Create the list of top 20% of members to target

**Step 2: *Develop a win-back campaign that reinstates trust in the organization***

- Identify strategies to stay in touch with the targeted members
- Determine which relationships to leverage for winning back specific members (e.g., staff and Board members)
- Create incentives that appeal to the targeted members
- Develop a timeline for implementation
- Gain commitment on roles and responsibilities
- Identify how to monitor the plan and the frequency of interim reviews

**Step 3: *Strongly communicate a compelling reason to rejoin by leveraging 4 key questions:***

1. What value message will we convey?
2. What communication mediums will we use to connect with these targeted members? (e.g., calls, visits, e-mails)
3. What frequency will we use to stay in touch with them?
4. What other influential sources can support our win-back efforts?

**Step 4: *Research the present needs and interests of targeted members***

- Document interactions with the targeted members and maintain them in a shared knowledge system (e.g., membership management program)
- Analyze the interactions and look for common themes and insights

**Step 5: *Evaluate and refine your win-back campaign by identifying which efforts are successful and which ones are not***

- Review outcomes regularly and share what's working
- Determine how to change what's not working well
- Re-prioritize your target list of past members as needed

Growth and a sustainable membership base require investments in proactive retention, win-back campaigns and new membership drives.

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