

Retention Ideas

For New Members:

1. **Welcoming Packet.** A welcome letter or e-mail from the state or local association president with a thank you and an invitation to the group's next meeting sets a positive tone with the new member. Although time-consuming, a follow-up phone call from the president or a local contact is a wonderful personal touch that is well worth the effort if it results in more active, satisfied members. (Personal interaction with new members is the best way to get them involved and ensure they stay involved in your association's activities.)
2. **First-time Meeting Buddy System.** Establish a committee of existing members that will be assigned to call new members to invite them to the next association meeting. Then the "buddy" greets the new members at the meeting and introduces them to other members to ease any initial apprehension. Some associations even go so far as to establish a rule that if a new member is present at a meeting or function, no two officers can talk to each other. They must talk with the new members.
3. **First-year Member Reception At State Convention.** Have your state president host a reception—open to all members—during which first-year members are recognized by the group. Think of all you can do to make them feel welcome and included.
4. **Association Newsletter.** List new members in each issue of your newsletter. Encourage established members to call and welcome them to the group.
5. **Scholarships.** Local associations award scholarships to a certain number of new members each year to attend state conference.
6. **Mentoring.** Ask seasoned teachers and long-time MTNA members to mentor new members. Pairing new members with veteran members will encourage the new members' participation in your group's activities and will result in increased member satisfaction and retention. Some suggested guidelines for a mentoring program are included in the next section of this handbook.

Retention Ideas For All Members:

- Programming: Plan programs that are diverse, comprehensive and applicable to all members of your association. Be sensitive to members' schedules and locations by offering alternative times and locations for meetings and activities throughout the year. Use varying means of communication to spread the word—newsletters, telephone calls, surveys, newspapers, television, radio, e-mail and so on.
- Provide seminars and programs for the new teacher getting started in the teaching field (business aspects of running a studio and so on). Provide childcare.
- Assist members in getting reconnected to a new local association after they move.
- Encourage meetings and activities that appeal to the non-pianist.
- Provide assistance for members who need financial assistance in order to attend the state conference (registration, conference meals, carpooling)
- Arrange carpooling for monthly local association meetings.
- Go after non-renewals. Find out why they did not renew. Look for trends and make adjustments. (types of programs, more fellowship and the like)
- Keep up-to-date in technology—use in association records and communication, plan programs on the use of technology in the teaching studio.
- Hold state-wide competitions or festivals for all instruments and voice.

- Keep members informed through local and state newsletters/websites. Include materials for festivals and auditions, membership directories, member handbooks, links to other resources, events, awards and pedagogical articles.
- Work younger members into leadership positions.
- Develop quality activities for students of members.
- Educate independent teachers on ways they can become full-time.
- Give IMT's ideas for affording to attend the national conference.
- Get members involved in all facets of MTNA: local, state and national. Encourage them to read the journals, visit the MTNA website, become certified, enter students in the competitions, serve and recruit.