

## Membership Summit - July 28, 2010

### Ultimate Goal

- Stabilize existing membership
- Increase over time to 1500

### Problems

- Struggling perfect storm – membership decline; line of credit inclining
- Staff is at minimum.

### Solutions

- Ask for help with ways to increase membership
- Open for discussion – what we can do to increase membership?

## Ideas

### How to retain members

- Find out why they don't renew
  - John Campbell – Contact dropped members
  - Paul Graf (willing to volunteer) – Exit interview with consistent questions
  - Susan Zeyher – Personal phone call for exit interviews
  - Mailings are not effective
  - Al Steiner – young families – median age is 66; some members are gone
  - Greg Miller – started in 1996, by 2004 – what did we do to get to that number
  - John Campbell - Was there a drop since 2007 due to the economy?
  - John Asher – how did we go so far in another direction from 2004 to present
    - Mary - We gave ridiculous amount of free stuff; we don't anymore – lost a lot of members with discontinuation of free passes, 50+% off passes are not popular
- Find reasons for new members to stay
  - Al Steiner – incentive for out of towners to re-join
  - John Asher – do we have records of old members; form with same questions
  - Leslie Gast – quick call that membership renewal is coming
  - Anni Lampert – devote staff member to maintenance of membership
  - Tom Hahn – proactive rather than reactive; three-year/five-year membership consideration; annual membership has risk
    - Susan Zeyher – but be sure to get enough money on multi-year to keep organization going
  - John Asher – instead of sending renewals; design as an invoice vs. renewal (invoice format = relationship-building, or not?)
  - Consider a system of auto-renewal? Maybe keep credit cards on (secure) file?
  - Greg Miller – 2 kinds of members: A) philanthropic members because they want to protect the institution and rarely take advantage of all Museum offers; B) benefit-driven group because we do things, social functions, some things are free – market to both groups
  - John Munch – need to market to the first group that likes what we stand for (mission)
  - Susan Zeyher – like events (what we are doing); do we analyze to see if they help the bottom line?
  - Personal handwritten notes on renewal notices = foster relationship
  - John Campbell – had to call 3 times to make a reservation; Work On Communication so members are treated to good service = relationship

## How to attract new members

- Who should we be targeting & how?
  - Museum visitors: Advertise/explain/invite membership upon arrival
  - Jim Fahey - Apply admission to membership fee
  - Al Steiner – it is a jewel; how far should our reach go? Defined – Visitor Centers job to get people to County; our job once they get here
  - Anni Lampert – Corp. Membership: market to Lodging, educators, restaurants and charter fisherman – should emphasize how they directly benefit; promote our impact on the community
  - Greg Miller – Ambassador program: gave free passes to create an experience and promote the Museum
  - Tom Hahn – what impact this Museum to figure out the impact we bring into this community
  - Susan Zeyher – Business community should be Good partners
  - Greg Miller – learn lessons to keep more people from exiting
  - Susan Zeyher – word out to young families
  - Frank Forkert – Boating is an addiction – market to boaters; get list of registered boaters in Door County
  - Identify value that we can offer
  - ASK: Talk to businesses to find out what would inspire them to become corporate members
  - Cap Wulf – Lodgers/tourism industry needs support to make this place a great place to be – put talking points together and market to them; sell value and benefits – little different pop each year; offer free passes that will give incentive to come back
  - Susan Zeyher – Pirates put together ourselves; sending folks off – do we send off other exhibits
  - Jim Fahey/Anni Lampert – study/research on memberships; College of public policy, internships
    - Al Steiner – campaign help: define what you need and then schools will do it
  - Trudy Herbst – current ratio (using summer addresses) is 74% local to 26% out-of-area
- John Asher – what do we need to do to sell memberships?
  - Cap Wulf – somebody has to ask for sale
  - Art Dilley – you need face to face/door to door; personal contact is most important; call can be a nuisance. Request only by mail is as effective as doing nothing.
    - Need to compete with entertainment; don't have the resources; personal contact should be priority
    - Susan Zeyher – a new brochure or re-vamped letter is not going to do it
    - Mary Hall – to keep in mind when planning solutions: winter renewals avg 30-50/month, but July & August are heaviest months with 200+ renewals/month
  - Mike Egan – Front desk is only contact/relationship – need to engage visitor & begin relationship – need best personnel there
    - Anni Lampert – relationships get stronger you have more opportunity
    - Al Steiner – 200 members is 10,000 dollars; but if the relationship is strong; strengthen relationships with more people
    - Bob Purves – have volunteers to greet and invite membership; capture a percent of Cana visitors
  - Paul Graf – Museum in 3 locations; are three locations integrated supporting one another? Make sure cross-selling
  - John Campbell – admission percent
  - Ed Eickenberg – Attendance: tremendous amount of traffic – use as a selling point; single largest attraction in Door County – it is an incredible talking point (fill lodging rooms and something to do); thousands of people come here; (membership is small part of budget >7%)
    - Again, promote the museum's impact on community as a value

- Promote “Quality of Life” as a benefit
  - Art – is there one person dedicated to sales? Needs precedence/priority
  - Dan Austad – Caution: image is out there that we are doing so great that we don’t need help
- Dan Austad – **Benefits: What more could we offer?**
  - Member-get-a-member incentives (regular schedule; not just a one-time campaign)
  - Boat show new member incentives – bonus gift for joining during festival?
    - Greg Miller: Big admissions savings was positive enough
    - (Bob Desh: “candy-coated blackmail”)
  - Anni Lampert – rates are fine; people do business with people they know – it takes time to build/strengthen relationships; go after socio-economic group where we have a shot
  - Cap Wulf – little different pop each year; offer free passes that will give incentive to come back BUT are we currently giving away too much? Tug and tower could be held back as value-added perks
    - “feels” like more of a benefit when it is tangible free stuff – may be appreciated more than everything just rolled in
  - Jon Gast – it is surprising – people do not use memberships very much; memberships use for support more than anything;
  - Al Steiner – free day for kids once a week
  - Corporate: build/install a special brochure rack at all 3 locations; reserved exclusively for Corp. Members’ materials

#### How to proceed?

- Dan – form to committees to increase members
- Susan Zeyher – needs to choose top 5 and then break into plan; set goals
- Bob Desh – Help with compelling arguments to sell memberships
- Greg Miller – develop membership plan; set date for next meeting
- Dan Austad – bring friends, new members. Don’t have to have been at this first one to participate in the next one.

#### Next meeting –

- Please respond with availability for three choices:
  - Wednesday, August 18 at 7:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, August 24 at 7:00 p.m.
  - Thursday, August 26 at 7:00 p.m.