A Guide to Setting up an Assembly Paid S.A.M. National Membership Dues System (APMD)

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Vancouver, BC Canada S.A.M. Assembly #95 members have never personally had to pay a local or national membership due ever since the Assembly was chartered in 1988. What is their secret, which not only provides for an exceptional renewal retention rate, efficiency and no lateness in the renewal process, but also, absolutely no impact on its individual members’ pocketbooks?

Here is the system, step by step, by Assembly #95, which they have been successfully using for years, which you may also adopt for your Assembly, and reap the benefits of not only happier members at renewal time, no late or lapse membership notices, but also more active members in your Assembly year round.

1. **The Assembly Executive sets a date on which the Assembly will pay for all National S.A.M. dues for those members who qualify.** If this is a relatively new Assembly where most of the members have a common renewal date, as most are charter members, then this date is easily chosen as it should be when these members would normally pay for their renewal. However, if this is an Assembly where renewal dates are all over the map, then you may choose a date, which is based on the renewal date of the majority of the members. For the other members, there is no problem also using this same common date because you should understand that annual S.A.M. National Membership dues can be paid in advance without impacting an individual member’s renewal date. Therefore, if is established, for example, that the Assembly is to pay for all dues on December 1, 2021 although some memberships expire April 1, 2022, then those later expiring memberships will get their memberships extended until April 1, 2023, not December 1, 2022. Thus members retain their individual renewal date, and just receive another year added to their membership.

2. **A fundraising show or event is decided upon by the membership to take place prior to the common date set by the Assembly to pay for individual membership renewals.** Net proceeds of this fundraising event are earmarked to first pay for membership renewals. If excess funds are available the a small honorarium may be provided to contributing individuals, and/or a dinner credit towards the Assembly’s annual dinner. Any remaining funds would be deposited to
strengthen the Assembly’s coffers. Alternatively, the Assembly could decide that the funds be used to subsidize each member’s registration for the next S.A.M. National Convention.

3. **The President, in consultation with the Assembly Executive, is responsible for determining whose National membership dues are to be paid.** Only those members who contribute to the fundraising event in the form of performance (Stage & Close-up), ticket selling, backstage & front of house, etc., depending on the type of fund-raising event chosen, would be eligible for Assembly paid renewal. Certain exceptions for exemplary service may be made. Rules need to be established in advance and should be voted on at a regular local Assembly meeting.

4. **The President, in conjunction with the Treasurer, writes a single check or PayPals to the National Administrator with a list of the members’ names and membership numbers for those members who renewal memberships the Assembly is paying for.** This makes for a simple and worry free renewal mechanism for all members of the Assembly, as individual members do not have to go to any effort on their own part to renew their membership. Therefore, no forgetting or lateness in the renewal, and best of all, the National Administrator loves your Assembly for this! Of course, these days with on-line auto renewal available to simplify the renewal process for members, if members choose to do this, then it is a simple matter of the Assembly reimbursing funds back to the members. Likewise, in fairness, contributing lifetime members can be reimbursed an amount equivalent to the individual renewal membership fee.

5. **All members who are eligible to have their National Membership dues paid by the Assembly, also have their Local Dues paid for or waived by the Assembly.** This is a bonus incentive to those contributing members, and there is no net cost to the Assembly for this.

6. **Any members who do not contribute to the fundraising event will need to pay for their National and local membership dues on their own.** As they see every other members’ membership being paid for by the Assembly, they will be encouraged to up their contribution the next year, with the end result being a much more active Assembly, with all members participating and contributing.

Vancouver, Canada Assembly #95 has put on at least one specific fundraising event each year, since the Assembly was founded by the current Dean of the Assembly, Life S.A.M. member, Past RVP Canada, Shawn Farquhar. This fundraiser had the primary purpose of paying for members' National S.A.M. dues.

The Assembly’s first annual fundraiser, and one that continued for many years afterwards, as secured by longstanding Assembly #95 President, Current RVP Canada, and Past President of The BC Science Teachers’ Association, Lon Mandrake, was held at Science World. At this, one of Canada’s leading science centers, Assembly members either performed on stage or close-up during a 3 day to one week engagement, entertaining visitors to the center. No tickets or
promotion was needed to be done by the Assembly as this was the responsibility of the center which paid the Assembly a lump sum fee for its participation. All performers received their local and National S.A.M. dues paid for by the Assembly plus an honorarium.

Assembly #95 has now even created their own beautiful set of tall vertical professional banners to display at shows. Thanks to member Trevor Watters for designing.

Other fundraisers have been at malls, again with the fee paid for by the organizer, and, as well, at theatres. At theatres, the Assembly was responsible for running and performing at the show, and the funds raised were the result of direct ticket sales by the Assembly members. All those who participated in any aspect of the event, received their National membership dues paid for.

Most recently, the Assembly has hired outside entertainers to perform at their annual awards dinner event. In these cases, although close-up magic was provided by the Assembly, the focus was shifted to primarily ticket sales by members, as this was the only way to get this type of event established by having members get the word out and actively sell tickets to their family, friends and contacts. Therefore, those who sold a minimum level of tickets were rewarded with their National membership dues paid for. Having members donate prizes (magic or non magic) for a raffle resulted in extra funds to help offset the cost of the talent.

For efficiency of accounting, fair table assignments, and ticket sales tracking, this year the Assembly decided to use the excellent Eventbrite www.eventbrite.com on-line ticketing management system.

With print at home & mobile ticket technology, ability to create promotional pricing campaigns at will, all credit and no cash accounting, full statistics, and scan at door entry management with an app on your mobile phone, the efficiency of the system is simply dazzling. Every member had the ability to instantly sell tickets on their mobile phone or computer, so no pre-printed paper ticket stock was necessary. The Assembly knew exactly how many tickets were sold at any point
in time, there were no last minute surprises of held but unsold tickets on event day, no will call needed, and no line-ups at the door.

As there are no paper tickets, but sometimes it is nice to have something to give out to people, I designed an attractive keeper coupon with the S.A.M. logo, QR code, and a promotional code for Assembly #95 members to hand out to prospective ticket buyers. See sample below:

Now that this ticket based event has been successfully established, the focus for the Assembly may switch back to a combination of ticket sales and performance participation as the basis for the dues payment rules for future events.

Therefore, it really is up to the Assembly to choose what type of fundraising event they wish to hold. The key is to set the date well in advance, establish and agree upon the rules for National membership dues to be paid, commit to a recurring annual event which primary purpose is to pay for members’ National membership renewal dues, and enlist every member to actively participate in the planning and successful execution of the event.

Upon request, I can provide you with an example of the rules and incentives Assembly #95 set up for their last fundraising event which was ticket selling based.

Please feel free to contact myself or your Regional Vice President for additional information or assistance in setting this up for your Assembly, to increase your Assembly’s and National’s membership retention and active member participation.

Respectfully submitted,

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