

BEST PRACTICES



Best Practices #100: Chapter Survey Heading Chapter Structure

Members are the life blood of AAW chapters, not only for the revenue members provide through their annual dues, but also for their time and talents as volunteers. For your chapter to remain viable and healthy, you will need to attract new members and retain existing members. The task of attracting and retaining members is such an important part of your chapter that it requires the attention of your board.

Many chapters conduct surveys to monitor the relationships that they have with their members and to allow members the opportunity to “be heard.” One of the best uses for a member survey is to identify those members who are likely to drop their membership, and to use this information to develop strategies to retain members.

Value of Membership

Value and loyalty questions give an indication of whether or not members feel they are getting value in their membership on par with the money and time they are asked to contribute.

Questions that determine value and loyalty of members:

- How often do you attend local chapter meetings?
- What were the main reasons you joined the chapter?
- Are you a member of the American Association of Woodturners?
- Who/what influenced you to join the association?

Value of Programs and Events

Your monthly meetings, hands-on classes, and professional demonstration events are major components of the chapter's value. You need to ensure that your programs are meeting the needs of the membership.

Questions that ask about your chapter's events and activities:

- How valuable was last month's meeting?
- What was the best aspect of this year's meetings? The worst?
- What topic(s), demonstrations, or workshops would be of most interest to you?
- Are the meetings and events addressing topics for your skill level?
- What means of communication are effective for the chapter members?

Timeline and Sending Out the Survey

Developing a timeline and determining how to send out the survey and which members to survey are important. Factors in determining if this is to be a mailed, paper survey or an email one will be access to the survey and anticipation of the number of returns you hope to receive to make this a valuable survey.

Analyzing Results

Analyzing the survey results using Excel. There is a help guide developed by University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, Wisconsin at this link
<https://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-14.pdf>

Follow-up member surveys do a good job of tracking progress to see if the percentage of loyal members is growing and if members appreciate the association's process improvements. One of the best ways to determine whether intervention and prevention strategies are paying off is to observe whether the retention rate goes up and the additional revenue generated from these members more than offsets the cost of retention efforts. That is the bottom line.

The following documents are from the Minnesota Woodturners Association 2014 survey. ***Our thanks to the MWA and their board*** for sharing their survey: Tom Peter, Janese Evans, Lee Tourtellette, Mark Debe, Will Travis, Ray Munro, and President Neil Robinette.