

This member-related e-mail is a service offered to you as an Academy Member.

Date: February 5, 2008

To: State Ophthalmology Society

- Presidents
- Presidents-Elect
- Membership Chairs
- Councilors/Alternate Councilors
- Executive Directors

From: Cynthia Bradford, MD, Secretary for State Affairs
Daniel Briceland, MD, Associate Secretary for State Affairs

Re: State Society Membership Development: Member Segmentation

While there are various models employed, in general member segmentation helps you better understand and respond to different member needs and motivations. By breaking your members and prospective members into subgroups, you are better able to define how members want to interact with your association and the types of information they value.

Dale Paulsen, through his Allegiance® Model, believes that association members fall into one of nine different categories:

- Mailboxers: These members primarily want involvement through mail, fax, or computer.
- Relevant Participants: They attend relevant conventions and seminars.
- Shapers: They are most active and want to shape association policy.
- CompShoppers: They compare this association to other organizations
- Cognoscenti: They want the association to add to their fund of knowledge.
- Status Conscious: They join to improve their professional image.
- Altruistics: They share the values of the association.
- Doubters: They tend to resist change and new initiatives.
- Non-Relevants: Their status has changed and the association may no longer be relevant

Boards are abnormal. This is to say, board members and other leaders are not representative of the typical member, by the mere fact of their active participation in the leadership of the organization. Board members and other leaders are Shapers in the Allegiance Model, and represent only about 1% of members. Thus, a poll of this group cannot serve as a reliable barometer of how most members might react. The society must look to other segments, like the Relevant participants or Mailboxers to get an accurate view of the typical member, and ultimately to determine what the typical member wants from the society.

Another example of a segmentation model might be:

- Student – Yr 1 & 2
- Student – Yr 3 & 4
- Graduate – Yrs 1-2
- Career Starter – up to age 29
- Career Builder – age 30-40
- Mid Career – age 40-50
- Consolidator – age 50-60
- Pre-Retirement – age 60-65
- Retired

With input from your leaders, committee members, and staff, work to define your member segments and non-member segments. As you consider how you might use member segments, focus on identifiable characteristics of member groups, rather than on the size of the segments or a particular quantity of segments. Once you have defined segments, then you can begin to tailor your communications and your activities to focus on the needs and interests of these segments in your membership retention and membership recruitment efforts.

For example, using the Allegiance Model, you might:

- Target Shapers to serve on committees, develop programs and help recruit new members
- Target Altruistics for letter writing campaigns
- Send repeated meeting announcements only to those who are Relevant Participants
- Send Mailboxers an annual index of your coding resources

The **Minnesota Academy of Ophthalmology** was one of the first state societies to define young ophthalmologists or "YO's" as a member segment. It defined YOs as ophthalmologists in training or in their first five years of practice. All members in this segment are automatically included in mailings for the YO Section (YOS@MAO) and YOS@MAO articles are included in the member newsletter. Educational programs have been developed that specifically address the needs of those starting out in practice, and social events were organized for YOs that are appropriate for families with young children. By defining this member segment and focusing on the needs of members in this segment, The MAO was able to increase membership and member participation among those in the YOS@MAO.