

Membership Committee Guide **Updated 2012**

The purpose of this guide is to capture ideas and lessons learned regarding the attraction and retention of AHS members throughout the world. It should be reviewed and updated at least annually and be made available to all membership committee members and other AHS officers upon request. Maintenance and updates to this document are the responsibility of the AHS Membership Vice President and inputs are encouraged from all membership committee members.

1. Membership dues via automatic payroll deduction

A pilot program was launched in 2007 in the Southwest Chapter by Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. The pilot was very successful (a 50% increase in membership achieved). The program consists of the following elements:

- a. A website tailored specifically for each company is developed and hosted by AHS. Each company employee uses the AHS provided link to access the online membership sign-up/renewal page.
- b. Membership fees are collected on a per paycheck basis amortized across the year. For example, a company that pays employees every two weeks (26 checks) deducts \$2.50 from each paycheck to cover membership fees for those older than 30. This sum is equivalent to the \$65.00 annual fee for a regular membership in this age bracket.
- c. Membership fees are communicated via the online website on a price per paycheck basis (verses the annual fee total).
- d. Options for the *Journal of the American Helicopter*, etc. are handled in an analogous manner.
- e. Memberships via payroll deduction are automatically renewed annually (there's no need for employees to reconsider their membership each year, which helps with retention).
- f. AHS works with each company's finance department to establish distribution and verification methods. Typically, company-collected AHS membership fees are added up monthly and remitted to AHS via electronic transfer.
- g. AHS accepts the burden regarding employees who leave the company mid-membership. AHS is responsible for collecting any remaining dues from that member or suspending the membership if needed.

With the above process in place, companies are encouraged to develop and launch a membership drive at least annually. As part of the campaign, support from each company's top management is encouraged. Messages of support from management along with the link to the online membership signup page should be disseminated using the company's internal intranet website. A link to the company's local AHS Chapter that includes the membership signup link is encouraged. It should be available throughout the year (not just during member drives).

Prize incentives for new members are also encouraged. AHS headquarters is willing to offer custom mugs, printed with both the company and AHS logos, for each new member and each member who renews via payroll deduction. The company can consider additional incentives awarded based on random drawings for new or renewing members who join via payroll deduction. These additional incentives can include free helicopter rides, desktop models of one of the company's products, sports shirts with company logo, gift certificates to the company store, etc.

2. The role of Specialists' Meetings/AHS Annual Forum as a Recruitment Attraction & Retention Tool

Several of the local chapters have had a great deal of success attracting and retaining members by hosting technical specialists' meetings. The key here is establishing a registration price for members and then bumping the price up to cover the fee of \$65.00 per year for non-members. The non-members are then given a "free" one year membership in AHS. Thus, all non-members who register to attend the specialists' meeting automatically become members for at least a year.

3. Outreach to potential new members beyond the core technical pool

As you will see in the next section regarding AHS headquarters Initiatives, there are many attractive reasons to join AHS that are either in place or in the works today. AHS membership is not just for engineers. Everyone involved in the vertical lift industry represent potential AHS members. From the factory floor to top executives, any individual in any position and discipline involved in our industry is a candidate to join AHS. Many people in our industry are interested in knowing and understanding the "bigger picture" regarding not only their own company, but the ongoing issues and news throughout the industry. AHS is making membership more attractive to all disciplines, including non-technical folks, by providing additional member only content beyond just the technical domain. Local chapters are encouraged to learn about these new incentives to join AHS and to cast a wider net when formulating and executing their own membership drive campaigns.

4. AHS Headquarters Initiatives

AHS headquarters is pushing for several initiatives to reclaim and expand the membership worldwide.

AHS headquarters began using electronic renewal notices in February 2008. This ensures the member is not only timely with his or her renewal but that they are also reviewing their profile to ensure their information is as up-to-date as possible.

AHS headquarters has the *Journal of the American Helicopter Society* available online starting with its first issue in 1956 up to the current issue of the day. Nearly all Annual Forum Proceedings and many Specialists' Meetings Proceedings are also now available on the AHS Online Store. This online area is in a searchable format and allows an instant and immediate payment and receipt of the document – an asset to any researcher.

Over the last few years, we have lost various members to retirement and job migration, as well as due to email communications issues. We have distributed a letter to former members who lapsed more than twenty-four months ago with some encouraging results.

5. Local Chapter Dinner meeting ideas

- a. Speakers - For those recruiting graduating students, the company recruitment team may be willing to visit a campus and speak at the local chapter as part of their overall recruitment visit.
- b. Program Managers and Chapter Presidents should receive local chapter meeting notices from AHS Headquarters monthly so that they can obtain ideas as to who other chapters are inviting to speak.
- c. Website Dinner Meeting Summaries - A summary of each chapter dinner meeting (ideally with a few select pictures) may be sent to AHS headquarters to be posted on the vtol.org website. This serves two purposes: 1) It provides insights into activities across all the chapters, and 2) It gives individual chapters ideas regarding speakers, meeting formats and venues, etc. Each local chapter can host this same information on their own website if they have one as well as provide it to company's represented in the chapter to host on their internal intranet websites.

6. Other Programs and Incentives

- a. Chapters may invite local university students to attend chapter dinner meetings (at no cost if they are AHS members) and make ten minute presentations on their university research projects.
- b. In conjunction with the AHS Forum, the staff invites some 50-70 students to volunteer to help at two technical sessions in exchange for complimentary registration at the Forum (sans the banquet) with the caveat that they be members. This generates a significant number of new members each year and exposes students to the world's most significant vertical flight technical event.
- c. AHS has replaced the Society's website, improving its usability and navigation for members. In addition, AHS now has a robust presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

Membership Renewal/Retention Information

To assist in local membership, a quarterly (January, April, July and October) report of the chapter's membership will be available to Chapter Membership Chairs and Presidents through the online portal. These reports will include statistics provide a comparison over three years and cover the following category breakdowns:

- Employer Affiliation
- Chapter Counts
- New Members
- Length of Membership (Coming Soon)

In addition, a report of all AHS New Members and all Expired Members is emailed on a monthly basis. These statistics provide a comparison over three years and cover the following category breakdowns:

- Employer Affiliation
- Length of Membership
- Other Reports Upon Request

These reports will assist in membership promotion and retention. Keeping a current member active is as important as sponsoring a new member.

Outlined below is the billing schedule for AHS renewals. Lapses in membership are often due to oversight and address changes. Chapter Membership Chairs are encouraged to call, or encourage their members to call, AHS headquarters if they are not receiving their membership materials.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>1st Request Mailing</i> | <i>2 Months Prior</i> |
| <i>2nd Request Mailing</i> | <i>1 Month Prior</i> |
| <i>3rd Request Mailing</i> | <i>1st Week of the Month Due</i> |
| <i>Suspense Notice</i> | <i>1 Month Past Due</i> |
| <i>"Please Come Back"</i> | <i>2 Months Past Due</i> |