How to Retain Members

Retention of members is a vital part of any club’s operation. There is really only one way to do this, and this to have an overall programme of member involvement and information sharing. To succeed, a club needs enjoyable and workable Journey and Social programmes.

How to go about this? Here are some suggestions that might help.

**Club Gatherings**

- Social events should contain an element of business as well as social.
- Work from a pre-planned format on each occasion – members respond better if they know what is going to happen.
- At such Gatherings, make sure members are informed about:
  - Upcoming Journeys – Inbound, Outbound & Domestic - allow Coordinators time to speak.
  - Upcoming Socials – future events – allow organisers time to speak.
  - Reports from previous events – Journeys, Socials, and Ambassador Reports.
  - Latest news from FFI.
  - Latest news from FFNZ – such as Conferences, Field Days, information.

**Club Information and Training**

Build into your annual programme some information and training meeting(s).

- Reinforce the Friendship Force aims and mission for new and old members.
- Ask returned ambassadors to tell of their Journey experiences.
- Discuss cultures – not only overseas, but also NZ ones.
- Discuss the part that all members can play in assisting the club.

**Journey Programmes**

Plan to have a varied and interesting programme of Journeys:

- Inbound International Journeys – members join FF to host people from other parts of the world, make friendships, and to contribute to world peace one friend at a time.
- Outbound International Journeys – members join FF to learn about others’ cultures, customs and traditions, to meet and make friends with people from other places in the world, and to contribute to world peace one friend at a time.
- Outbound Domestic Journeys – for members no longer able to travel overseas.
- Inbound Domestic Journeys.
**Club Socials**

Plan to have an interesting and varied social programme. Some ideas:

- Regular Coffee Mornings
- Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner/Lunch (great for mixing old and new members)
- Progressive lunches or dinners
- Pot Lucks (always popular)
- LEO (Let’s Eat Out) - This is a fun get-together dinner/lunch
- Summer functions (outdoors during day and/or evening)
  - Picnics
  - Car Rally (always popular)
  - Barbecue and swim
  - Fish and chips at beach or lake or river
  - Outdoor Sports (bowls, croquet, mini golf, petanque)
  - Visit gardens or other interesting places
  - Mystery trip (bus or private cars)
- Winter functions (indoors and mostly during the day).
  - Film afternoon
  - Soup and bun, and dessert
  - Games afternoons or evenings
  - Card games – many options.
  - Board games – many options
  - Indoor Sports (indoor bowls, ten pin bowling, darts, table games)
  - Quizzes (themed, cryptic)
  - Murder Mystery
  - Bring gift purchased overseas and talk about it.
- Themed functions are always fun!
  - Christmas (mid-year)
  - Funny hats (mad hatters, Christmas, cowboy)
  - Dress up reverse
  - Dress up costume beginning with a letter (P, F, C, I, plenty of options)
  - Dress up as a country (Japan, Scotland, other)
  - Dress up as a decade (50s, 60s, 70s, etc)
  - Special event (Olympics, royal events, elections)
  - Who am I or where am I from?
  - Las Vegas cocktail evening

**Institute a Buddy System for New Members**

Allocating a buddy for each new member makes them feel welcome.

- Choose an experienced club member who lives close to the new member.
- Ask the buddy to contact the new member before each club event and offer to pick them up if appropriate.
- Keep the buddy system going for at least a year until the new member feels part of the club.