

NPEA 2007 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:
(OCTOBER 20, 2007 – OCTOBER 24, 2007)

EXPANDING MEMBER EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

Facilitator: Terese Foran, ERS of Texas
Co-Facilitator: Frank Skolte, State of Minnesota TRA

'Roll Call' of Major Concerns, New Ideas

The major concern for most participants was how to reach early- to mid-career members.

- Suzanne – Duluth, MN; How to start mid-career seminars, how to get younger members interested in retirement planning.
- Jane S. – TRA, MN; Interested in women's seminars, also getting younger teachers interested in retirement planning.
- John – New York State; Strategies to reach 35-45 year olds.
- Bill – Illinois; Looking to start early career presentations.
- Julie – Arizona; Needs ideas to reach younger/mid-career members.
- Karen – San Jose; Has 'Building your Wealth' seminars, also looking for Early/Mid-career marketing strategies.
- Paul – New Mexico; They do a Webcast to members, easy and low cost.
- Chris – Penn; They do personalized group presentations.
- Joselyn – Utah; They have Early/Mid-career presentations, but need marketing ideas.
- Cassandra – Michigan; Starting a Webcast program for mid-career members.
- Jane – Alabama; Have a strong Early career, need ideas to market Mid to Late career program.
- Denise – N. Dakota; They do group sessions with individual information, ideas to expand service with summer groups and school in-service training.
- Claudette – Alaska; Ideas to get members in early, make a retirement seminar mandatory for all new members.
- Tony – Houston; Members with 10 or less years of service are the biggest challenge.
- John N. – InFRE; His idea is to collect all information that we know to one place and then share with all funds so we are not reinventing the wheel.
- Steve – Ohio; How to involve new members.
- Joe – Penn. State; Make members more self reliant with more info on the Web.
- Kevin – Iowa; uses financial planners to do group presentations to bring in younger members. Uses e-mail to schedule sessions.

- Elizabeth – Marketing idea to title the session ‘I wish I would have known this 20 years ago’.
- Paula – Texas; Uses laptops in sessions to bring members info to the field for those within one year of retirement. Marketing idea is to do video conferences and Saturday conferences.
- Carol – Colorado Trustee; Challenge your General Counsel on legal issues, do more outreach programs; always keep a personal touch in member contact.
- John – PERA MN; How to market early/mid-career, use employers to allow you to bring the presentation/training to the members.
- Deb – Missouri Hwy Patrol; Looking for info on starting a Mid-career program.
- Dawn – Washington; Employer sponsored plans work.
- Bonnie – Washington; Encouraging bringing your spouse, for generation X and Y offer them options to get them interested.
- Tena – Colorado; Runs retirement projections for everyone in groups and one-on-one sessions.
- Scott – San Mateo; Recorded presentation and put on the Web, require all new members to see the presentation.
- Sharee – Penn. Schools; They don’t do individual sessions; only do small groups (10) for members retiring in current year.

Highlights of ideas discussed

- Remember that friends and peers are very influential.
- Employees may be more likely to listen to a speaker or counselor closer to their own age or life stage.
- Employees are more likely to attend events if there’s an incentive. Consider partnering with organizations that can do incentives for you (e.g., food or door prizes)
- Give employees options for how they receive information, e.g., one-on-one? E-learning? Print?
- Customize your message. Realize that someone in their 20s/30s is more concerned about credit card debt and buying a new home than retirement. It is our challenge to show them why they need to be interested in retirement!
- Partner with unions and associations.
- Why not use quotes that all of us hear as tag lines for your materials? E.g., “Wow, I wish someone would have told me that 20 years ago!” or “If I knew then what I know now” or “Having this information would have helped me send my children to college.”
- One system is using video counseling and the response was been good.
- One system is pursuing mandatory new employee orientation for all agencies via existing participation agreements.

- Consider using semi-scare tactics in marketing materials, e.g. “In your retirement, will you dine or dive (as in dumpster dive)?” “Do you want steak or spam?” (But stay away from using images that aren’t realistic for your retirees, e.g., yachting, luxury cars, etc.)
- We agreed that taking your message to your members, going to their place of work for the face-to-face interaction – almost always works best, especially if you have personalized packets or statements ready in advance.
- In general, members want you as the counselor to make the decisions for them.