

2005-2006 Club Achievement

Austin Advertising Federation - Membership

Cassie Turner, Vice President of Membership / Heather Ladage, Board Member

OBJECTIVES:

1. Form a membership committee.
2. Improve communication processes with members and find new, more efficient ways to do this including using Cvent, a new online tool.
3. Increase member participation through person-to-person contact and broader volunteer opportunities.
4. Provide quality programs, events and benefits to ensure the value of an Austin Ad Fed membership.
5. Maintain memberships and acquire new memberships to attain at least 5% growth over the 2004-2005 membership.

Target audience: Austin area residents whose professional lives are influenced by advertising. This includes: traditional ad agencies, marketing communications professionals, traditional and interactive media and production industries, industry vendors, non-profit organizations and students.

OBJECTIVE 1: Form a membership committee.

The new vice president of membership, Cassie Turner, was able to start the year off using the knowledge she gained as an active member of the committee in 2004-2005. During that time, she assisted Interim VP of Membership Heather Ladage and was groomed to be Heather's replacement. Cassie recruited several strong board members to join her committee, including the president of The University of Texas Advertising Graduate Council to reach out to the students and get them to join as new graduates. We experienced a few challenges early in the committee, losing members to illness and work conflicts. After our volunteer coordinator resigned in October, we quickly replaced him with Michael Roberts, who proved to be a reliable coordinator. His efforts were key to the success of the committee. The team met several times throughout 2005-2006 to discuss and implement plans, and also corresponded frequently through email.

OBJECTIVE 2: Improve communication processes with members, and find new, more efficient ways to do this including using Cvent, a new online tool.

The best way to strengthen a relationship is through communication, so one of the Austin Advertising Federation's goals was to continue with our communications initiative, while revamping some of the processes. We have always relied heavily on e-mail, PDF's, HTML newsletters, our website and hyperlinks. However, this year we decided to use Cvent. Cvent is an online tool that allows members to register for events, and provides the club with information directly from the invitation they receive through email. This new tool cut down on a lot of work for both our committee and our association headquarters, allowing us to focus our energies on other areas. Not only did we save the club a great deal in printing and postage costs, but we also conserved one of our most valuable resources - time. As of February 2006, we have 221 members and a complete database of 1,700 members and prospects. Along with Cvent, the methods we've used to reach out to them in the past year are outlined below:

E-mail

Our membership is effective for one year from the enrollment date, so renewal campaigns are conducted each month. The month prior to expiration, the member receives an email renewal letter. The next month, follow-up phone calls are placed. When the renewal is processed, the member receives a thank you e-mail with information on club activities and membership benefits.

(Exhibit: Renewal email letter)

Direct Mail

All new and renewal members receive a signed welcome/thank you letter from the VP of Membership. In order to make the letters more targeted, this year we used two different letters one for new members and one for renewals. **(Exhibits: Welcome new member letter, Renewal member letter)**

Website

Our redesigned website is a consistently updated resource for our members. It contains the latest information on events, programs, jobs and industry-related news. Our bi-monthly newsletter and many of our other e-mail communications contain hypertext links to details on the website. One of the benefits of being a member of the Austin Ad Fed is that members can place ads on our website's Jobline free of charge. The price for non-members is \$50 per listing. This benefit has motivated several companies to become members in order to take advantage of this free listing opportunity. **(Exhibit: Website print out)**

Brochure

In 2003, the Austin Advertising Federation produced a very attractive brochure that explains the benefits of becoming a member. A stack of brochures is on the registration table at all of our

monthly luncheons so prospective members can pick one up and read at their leisure about what our club can offer them. Although they are starting to become somewhat dated, these brochures are still a powerful selling tool for the organization. **(Exhibit: Brochure)**

Newsletter

The Austin Advertising Federation produces a bi-monthly HTML newsletter that covers member news and articles of interest to the advertising community. Members and non-members are contributing writers. Last year we added a section called Members Lounge where we highlight individual member news and achievements. Our newsletter is distributed to our entire database but only members can be featured in this new section. **(Exhibit: Newsletter)**

Outbound Telemarketing

Our board members placed personal calls to expired members on a monthly basis. Calls were also made during the fourth quarter 2005 in time to push ADDY Call for Entries, and first quarter 2006 as our deadline for the membership directory drew near.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase member participation through person-to-person contact and broader volunteer opportunities.

Membership Participation Background

Anecdotal information suggested our members often felt abandoned after joining the Ad Fed. They got plenty of attention while being recruited, and then “dropped off our radar” once they joined.

Membership Recognition Solution: Person to Person Contact

We purchased AAF membership certificates and cards to be included in a New Member Welcome Packet, mailed to all new members. The packet also includes a hand-signed welcome letter, the AAF Member Benefits list and invitation collateral for upcoming events. Committee members will then follow up with a personal phone call to each member. **(Exhibits: AAF member discounts & resources, Mutual of Omaha brochure, AAF Hertz discount card, new member certificates, new member cards)**

Increased membership participation through broader volunteer opportunities.

By maintaining three public service campaigns, we provide more opportunities for volunteers to use their skills and give back to the community. We created new web pages linked to our public service

clients. Email broadcasts linked to these pages produced dozens of new volunteers. Letters from the president in each newsletter spoke to the benefits of volunteering. We also listed all volunteer opportunities on the member Jobline. **(Exhibit: Jobline volunteer opportunities list)**

By providing volunteer opportunities we have provided true benefits to our members: learning new skills, making new friends, earning the chance to win ADDYs and giving back to their community. Our volunteer coordinator maintains a list of active volunteers, and distributes it monthly to board members. Including public service volunteers and ADDY volunteers, we've seen over 200 people volunteer this year, an increase of more than 100%. **(Exhibit: Volunteer stats)**

Our public service clients **(Exhibit: Website public service feature)** include:

- Art From the Streets – a record \$80,000 in sales of art produced by homeless artists. **(Exhibits: Art From the Streets website, Austin Ad Fed web site feature, Photos from event)**
- Hill Country Ride for AIDS - \$452,000 raised in 2005. **(Exhibits: HCRA web site, HCRA brochure)**
- SIMS Foundation – Affordable Mental Health Care for Musicians - 50% increase in client appointments in the 90 days following the poster campaign. **(Exhibit – SIMS board commitment statement)**

This year the Austin Ad Fed also stepped up to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. We solicited our members for offers of unused office space. The club also donated the proceeds from our first luncheon sponsorship to the Red Cross. **(Exhibits: Web site, Letter from President to the American Advertising Federation national office)**

Using the list of current volunteers, the VP wrote a letter urging the volunteers who were not yet members, to join the Austin Ad Fed. The letter listed benefits of becoming a member, and used persuasive language. The letters focus was that joining the Ad Fed was a mutually beneficial move. The Ad Fed can help perspective members in their career, and they can help us in continuing to build a strong, creative and diverse membership. **(Exhibit: Volunteer letter)**

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide quality programs, events and benefits to ensure the value of an Austin Ad Fed membership.

The Austin Advertising Federation strives to host programs that our members want to attend. We added an opportunity to gain new memberships from our luncheons by offering a free admission to our luncheon program to non-members who purchased a membership at registration. Our higher non-member price for lunch made this an attractive and successful recruiting practice resulting in 2 to 3 new memberships during each program. **(Exhibit: Save the date email)**

Big Wigs

Annually, we ask our members to vote for their favorite advertising industry service providers. The Big Wig Awards luncheon held on June 1, 2005 allowed us to honor the printers, production houses, media reps, and other vendors who provide critical support to agencies. The Big Wigs not only honors and recognizes industry luminaries in the non-agency realm, but also proves to be a powerful recruitment tool in targeting service and support organizations. The program also serves as our annual business meeting, during which members vote to confirm the Austin Advertising Federation's slate of new Board Members and Officers.

(Exhibit: Website announcement)

Membership Mixer

We had two membership mixers this year, one on May 4 and one in September. Members and potential members were informed via email invitations. These were open to members and friends of the Austin Advertising Federation and admission was free. To encourage membership, we gave those who joined that night a 15-month membership for the price of an annual membership. The mixers afforded an opportunity to talk to our members about the year's upcoming schedule of events, and served as an informal networking venue. After addressing the crowd, we gave away door prizes, etc. At the events, we collected business cards for the drawing. Subsequently, we have kept those new attendees in the loop with electronic communications about club events. Additionally, we have sent out an appeal for membership based on their participation in our events. We have plans to make these quarterly in 2006-2007 to provide members even more opportunities to network and socialize.

(Exhibit: Spring mixer invitation)

Monthly Lunch Programs

The goal of this year's Programs Committee was to offer our members a wide variety of program topics that would be educational, informative and help them stay current on industry trends.

Topics included cultural diversity themes including; Advertising and Marketing of the Texas Lottery Commission, Yahoo! branding with NSAC winning Texas State presentation and the winning 2005 Addy Reel. **(Exhibit: Luncheon program invitations)**

Hollydaze Party

On December 14, 2005, the club held its annual Hollydaze Party in conjunction with the Central Texas Direct Marketing Association, the Austin Chapter of AIGA and the Austin chapter of the American Marketing Association. The event was held at the VFW Center, where about 400 guests enjoyed live music, holiday treats and adult beverages. We used the event to promote ADDY entries, recruit new members, and network, as well as collect donations for a local food bank and Toys for Tots. **(Exhibit: Email invitation)**

ADDY Awards

This event is the premier advertising creative awards event in Austin, attracting creatives and other agency personnel, as well as many clients and local businesses. The event was promoted through the use of teaser posters that distributed to area agencies and universities. These posters directed interested individuals to the official website of the Austin ADDY Awards, www.lettheritualsbegin.com. Additionally, a formal call for entries piece was mailed to more than 1,700 members and non-members from our database. The ADDY show is more than an opportunity to recognize the top creative work. The overall competition, show promotion and preparation symbolize the camaraderie industry professionals share with one another. Austin Ad Fed members consistently rank among the top competitors within the national competitions. Our membership supports our ADDY Awards show through entry fees, ticket purchases, sponsorships and in-kind donations of materials and services. The response from our promotional efforts was overwhelming as we netted nearly 650 entries and ticket sales that exceeded 600 seats.

The Austin Advertising Federation Membership Directory is published as part of the ADDY winners' book. The membership directory is distributed immediately following the program and is a highly-regarded resource for advertising professionals in Central Texas. About a month prior to the awards, the vice president of membership sent out an email to all expired members, reminding them of the discounts they would receive on ADDY entries as a member. This email campaign directly resulted in at least 10 renewals prior to the ADDY Awards show. The Austin ADDY Awards show continues to

be a true driving force behind our membership in that many renewals and new membership can be credited to its promotion. **(Exhibits: Call for entries email, Direct mail piece, Direct mail piece insert, Meet the judges invitation, ADDY press release, Austin Business Journal press coverage)**

Additional Benefits

We also looked for opportunities to provide creative additional benefits to our members this year. An example of this included a discount to attend and recruit at The University of Texas School of Communications job fair. **(Exhibit: Web site print out)**

OBJECTIVE 5: Maintain memberships and acquire new memberships to attain at least 5% growth over 2004-2005.

We used all of the above objectives to ultimately reach the hard number goal. Beginning the membership year at 243 members, we currently sit at 221 members. This is a decrease of 22 members or 9%. Although we did not meet our goal of increasing membership by 5%, we made strides in other areas. The members we do have are more involved and feel more connected to the organization. Also, we have had a significant percentage of existing members renew their membership this past year. 180 of our 221 members since February 2005 are renewals, which means we have maintained 83.4% of our existing membership over the past year. We are very proud of the fact that over 3 out of 4 members decided to renew their memberships. Retention is key to maintaining our numbers.

Conclusion

While the Austin Advertising Federation membership has dropped since last year, we are determined to bring our numbers back up, and we have a plan in place to accomplish this. The person to person communication has improved the *quality* of our members' experience significantly, and now we will focus on improving the quantity. Conservative planning, attention to practice and continued use of innovative management methods will ensure continued growth and better service to members in years to come. More importantly, we have achieved four of our five objectives for the year, and we continue to make membership a top priority in our chapter. The one unsatisfied objective will only drive our committee to meet and hopefully exceed that objective in the coming year.