

MEMBERSHIP HACK: CONFERENCE BUDDY SYSTEM



BY TIM EBNER / FEB 10, 2017

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The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy uses a mentoring program that incentivizes conference attendance and provides members with opportunities to network and recruit new staff.

How to hack it? The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) saw an opportunity to increase event participation and onboard student members at its semi-annual meetings. The membership department created a conference buddy system that paired experienced members with new members, mainly student pharmacists and young practitioners.

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“We have a small membership team so we don't have a lot of time, money, or resources,” says Susan Noell, assistant director of corporate relations and membership. “With this program, we used an existing event, and

turned it into an opportunity to onboard student members to full-fledged members.” The program has grown exponentially: It launched in 2013 with 27 mentorship pairings. That number grew to 150 last year.

Why it works? Noell describes the program as a membership engagement tactic that’s an easy add-on for routine events. “Once you’re assigned a mentor, you meet with them face-to-face for an informal meeting, outside of the convention hall. The pairs also talk before, during, and after the meeting,” she says. “It helps us to gain buy-in and loyalty from members.” Students can learn about career paths in the field, and older members can meet and recruit new talent.

What’s the bonus? AMCP saw an uptick in meeting attendance after the conference buddy system was established. “Students started telling their friends about it, and attendees used it as a way to justify the cost to attend,” Noell says. “A lot of younger professionals cleared the expense with their boss because of the career networking opportunity.”