



# Hurricane Support Call

## Strategies for Member Relations and Renewals



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# Universal Relevance...

- ❑ Chambers on this call range from single-employee organizations to those with many staff.
- ❑ All of you are supporting members in distress while also managing upcoming renewals.
- ❑ The strategies shared here are adaptable for chambers of any size.





# Navigating Uncertainty

- ❑ **Assess Community Impact:** Understand local uncertainty before making renewal calls.
- ❑ **Uncertain Member Status:** Members are experiencing varying levels of disruption.
- ❑ **Timing Sensitivity:** Be thoughtful, respecting each member's recovery timeline.
- ❑ **Be Adaptable:** Adjust your approach based on each member's situation.
- ❑ **Financial Uncertainty:** Approach renewal discussions with empathy and awareness of financial challenges.





# Establish Renewal Protocols

- ❑ Avoid discounts; these conversations are about supporting members through difficult times.
- ❑ Some dedicated members may currently be unable to pay in full now due to recent hardships.
- ❑ Are flexible payments an option?
  - Monthly or quarterly payments.
  - Deferred payment.





# Compassionate Membership Extensions

- ❑ **Extend Memberships:** Offer a full year to members unable to renew.
- ❑ **Alternatives:** Adjust based on tenure or engagement if a full year isn't possible.
- ❑ **Use Compassion & Common Sense:** Focus on doing what's right for each member in tough times.





# Personal Outreach is Vital

- ❑ **Personal Touch:** Shows genuine care and support.
- ❑ **Immediate Feedback:** Allows real-time understanding of member needs.
- ❑ **Flexible Response:** Adjust your approach based on each conversation.
- ❑ **Build Trust:** Strengthens relationships through direct, thoughtful outreach.





# What to Expect on These Calls

- ❑ Some members may be facing tough realities, so expect some emotional calls.
- ❑ You may hear about layoffs, insurance claim and aid challenges, or even the reality that their business will not survive.
- ❑ Lead with compassion, and members will value your efforts.





# Expect Positive Conversations, Too!

- ❑ Many members will have uplifting stories to share.
- ❑ Members may discuss successes and adaptations.
- ❑ Create space for positive updates and experiences.







# Key Elements of Post-Hurricane Renewals

**Step 1:** Understand Each Member's Unique Challenges.

**Step 2:** Review Recovery Resources.

**Step 3:** Tactfully Pivot to Membership Renewal.





**Renewal Call, Step 1:**

# **Understand Each Member's Unique Challenges**

Taking time to genuinely understand how each member and their business are fairing.





# Ugh...Renewal Calls

- ❑ Even in the best times, these calls aren't our favorite.
- ❑ The hurricanes have made these conversations more sensitive.
- ❑ Every call requires extra care and empathy in how we approach each member.





# The Power of Message Maps!

- ❑ **Don't Wing It...**
- ❑ Message maps provide process and a reliable approach for calls.
- ❑ Ensure you know what to say and why.
- ❑ Not a telemarketing script.
- ❑ Like a coloring book, offering guidance with room for personalization.





# Initial Outreach

- ❑ Some chambers have initiated or will initiate outreach, showing care and support.
- ❑ Renewal calls are different because members have a clearer view of the crisis impact.
- ❑ Encourage open dialogue and invite members to share their challenges.





# Truly Understanding Members' Challenges

- ❑ Even when you have a feel for their situation, don't assume.
- ❑ You won't truly know until you hear it from them.
- ❑ Take time to listen and understand how each member is really doing.





# What Does This Sound Like?

Hi, <member name>, this is <your name> from <chamber name>. I hope it's alright that I'm reaching out today. (slight pause)

We're checking in on our members following the hurricane(s). (slight pause)

How are you and your family holding up during this time?





# Encourage Open Sharing

- ❑ Not everyone will openly share their situation when you first ask how they are doing.
- ❑ Asking a thoughtful follow-up question helps.







# Follow Up Question

How about your employees and your business, <member name>?





# Encourage Open Sharing

- ❑ Most members will open-up more and share details when you ask a follow up question about their business.
- ❑ Shows your genuine concern for them and their business, rather than just going through the motions.
- ❑ This approach focuses on grasping their situation while demonstrating compassion.





**Renewal Call, Step 2:**

## **Review Recovery Resources**

Demonstrate how your chamber serves as a vital resource for both individual members and the broader community.





# Can't They Google It?

- ❑ You may be thinking that members can search the internet for solutions.
- ❑ There's just too much information out there.
- ❑ Your chambers continually vet the information based on the needs of your communities.
- ❑ Experts, staff and volunteers have weighed in.
- ❑ So no, members are not be best served Googling it.





# No Need to Be a Recovery Expert

- ❑ **Don't Stress About Knowing Everything:** It's normal to feel overwhelmed by all the available resources.
- ❑ **Focus on the Basics:** Understand the essentials of each resource and the problems they address.
- ❑ **Refer In-Depth Questions:** Direct members with complex questions to knowledgeable staff.
- ❑ **Leverage Support:** For limited staff, consider involving volunteers for additional assistance.





# What Does This Sound Like?

I've been on many calls where our members have expressed frustration with how much information is being thrown around. (slight pause)

They aren't sure what to believe.





# Trust Factor

That's why our recovery resources are so valuable to local businesses. Our experts have vetted the information.

Trust is built by assuring members that your chamber has thoroughly vetted information before sharing it.





# Don't Just Tell Them, Help Them

Navigate your website resources with them.

Let me show you how easy it is to gain access to the latest and most accurate information.

By chance do you happen to be sitting in front of your computer?







**Renewal Call, Step 3:**

## **Tactfully Pivot to Membership Renewal**

Gently guide the conversation toward membership renewal, emphasizing your chamber's continued support and value.





# Care First, Then Ask About Renewals

- ❑ When you make the effort to sincerely understand each member's unique situation.
- ❑ Gain insight into what they're truly experiencing.
- ❑ Reinforce your chamber's role as a trusted resource in the community.
- ❑ You can respectfully assess a member's ability to renew.





# Pivot to Renewal

The process we recommend has three components:

1. Apologize,
2. Gain permission, and
3. Gauge the possibility of renewal.





# What Does This Sound Like?

**Apologize:**

<Member name>, one last thing before I let you go, and gosh, I hope it is not in bad form. (slight pause)





# What Does This Sound Like?

## Gain Permission:

Though, I am guessing you may be contemplating this in your business too. (slight pause)

<Chamber name> is trying to get a sense of timing on receivables.





# Three Replies

- Yes,
- No, or
- Maybe.





# If They Say “Yes”

- ❑ Do not overthink it
- ❑ Follow your normal protocol.





# If They Say “No”

- ❑ Unfortunately, some members will not be able to renew.
- ❑ It’s okay, these are challenging times.
- ❑ Put your member at ease.
- ❑ Tactfully mention flexible payments.







# Why Bring Up Payments?

- ❑ Avoid assumptions; members may want to renew but paying all at once is difficult.
- ❑ Use a third-party reference to introduce payment options without pressure.





# What Does This Sound Like?

## Flexible Payments Options:

While your membership investment genuinely makes an impact, we also understand that the timing is really-difficult right now. (pause)

We've set up smaller payments for some members. (slight pause) Would that help?





# Only Ask Once

- ❑ If a payment plan will not work, only ask once.
- ❑ We're not trying to convince otherwise.
- ❑ If a payment plan works, set it up and thank the member for their continued support.
- ❑ If renewing isn't feasible, follow your chamber's recovery renewal protocol to determine whether you will keep the member.





# What Does This Sound Like?

## Keep the Member:

We understand these are challenging times.

You have supported the chamber for (insert number) years as member and we are not going to let you go because the hurricane has hurt your business.

We are going to waive your membership dues for the next year (or another period) and try to help you and your business any way we can.





# What Does This Sound Like?

If possible, schedule a follow-up call for about 6 – 8 weeks out and email a meeting invitation.

Before I let you go, would it be out of line to check back with you once all of this has settled down a bit?





# What Does This Sound Like?

## Unable to Keep Member:

<Member name>, I don't have the words to express how truly sorry I am to hear about what's happened to your business. (pause for potential reply)

I wish there was more we could do to help.

You have my number. Please don't hesitate to call to if I can assist you in the future.





# If They Say “Maybe”

- ❑ It’s certainly understandable that some members will be unsure right now.
- ❑ If possible, establish a date and time specific follow-up call.
- ❑ Confirm the appointment with an email invite.





# What Does This Sound Like?

**When Member Says “Maybe”:**

Thank you for making <chamber name> part of your considerations.

If you don't mind my asking, when do you think it would be okay for me to check back with you?







# Final Thoughts

- ❑ **Lead with Empathy:** Approach every conversation with compassion and understanding.
- ❑ **Prioritize Understanding:** Take the time to genuinely understand your members' challenges and needs.
- ❑ **Demonstrate Care:** Show your commitment to supporting them during difficult times.
- ❑ **Be Flexible:** Adapt your approach based on each member's unique situation and capacity to renew.





# Questions & Thoughts?

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