

Social Events & Organized Dentistry

PDA frequently conducts social events as a tool to welcome members and introduce non-members to organized dentistry. With no CE or other business agenda items, the social events provide an avenue for interaction and networking among colleagues and with leaders. A few of PDA's social events include:

- CROP Family Fun Days / Picnics
- CROP Networking Receptions
- New Dentist Receptions
- Student Outreach Events

Benefits of Social Events:

- Developing Membership – a social event provides great opportunity for communicating member value, highlighting member benefits, interaction and developing relationships with non-members. This allows leaders and staff to generate their interest in membership and foster that interest with follow up communication and future events. *A social event isn't lightning in the bottle* – while it's true the non-member may very well join the next day (it has happened), non-members typically require repeat exposure to organized dentistry before they make the decision to join.
- Building Volunteers – one of the most common benefits is the recruitment of current members to serve as volunteers. Social events have interested a number of dentists so much that they have in turn had an interest in planning one in the future, or participating in follow-up, like creating a Facebook page to display event photos.
- Camaraderie – many dentists just want the opportunity to network with their peers and “talk shop.” Providing an outlet for them to do that is an immense benefit.
- Retaining Membership – often times, social events provide the one “touch” a member will get on a yearly basis with organized dentistry. If business meetings conflict with their office hours and local CE isn't their thing (destination CE continues to be a popular option), the social event might be the only program that gets them in the door. Forming those relationships with current members, so they find a source of tangible value to their membership, is what will encourage them to renew every year.
- Obtaining Feedback – these events provide an open opportunity to obtain feedback from members and non-members. How do they like your CE programming? What needs do they have in their practice? What about tonight's event do they really like? Determining this information is essential to recruiting and retaining members.

Helpful Tips

- Invite a Spouse or Guest – At some of PDA's social events, spouses or guests are invited along with the dentist. This is because some individuals might feel uncomfortable coming to an event by themselves. Having a guest with them automatically makes them feel more comfortable.

- Create a Cordial Atmosphere – The environment at your social event needs to be warm, welcoming and safe. We don't want the new guests to feel alienated or uncomfortable. For more information, please visit the Creating a Cordial Atmosphere document in the Component Resource Center at www.padental.org/crc.
- Pre-printed Name Badges & Materials – Make sure you have name badges available for all your attendees. This makes it easier on everyone to network and makes introduction far less awkward. Don't forget to have membership materials at your events – your own and PDA's! Give us a call a few weeks prior to the event and we'll send you some materials to display. (Better yet – give us a month+ notice and if you're interested, a staff member from the PDA will happily attend). Another great idea – have goodie bags to hand out as everyone leaves – include a few publications in the bag for them to review when they get home.
- Make Follow-Up a Priority – with members and non-members alike, make sure you send a follow-up note, email or even make a personal phone call. We encourage our component societies to send their attendance list to PDA for us to distribute our marketing materials to non-members.
- Paint the Walls – consider having a rolling PowerPoint presentation run during the course of your event. Use the TV's or a blank wall in your venue (based on availability) to display roughly 10 slides detailing member benefits. This is a great eye-catcher and conversation starter.