



by Kate Dumas

# Effective Mail and e-Mail Marketing Using Your Club Management Software

**R**egular communication with your members builds brand loyalty, improves cash flow and increases revenue. But for that communication to be effective, it must be timely, focused and relevant. Fortunately, today's sophisticated club management software can help you quickly and economically communicate with your members. And by using your software's filtering options, you can target members to maximize your campaign's effectiveness.

In this article, we'll take a look at the different ways successful clubs use their club management software to communicate with their members.

## Mail and eMail Merge

Similar to mail merge in Microsoft Word, the mail merge module of your club management software will allow you to create customized form letters and templates. Corresponding label printing is usually also available, drastically reducing the total time it takes to create a mail campaign. Another popular way to use this type of module is for email merging. Little-effort, no-cost email is perhaps the most efficient way to reach your clients today.

Before we begin talking about the types of letters you can create, there are a couple points to consider:

- Your mail merge capabilities are only as good as the data you have in your system. Are you tracking your member's interests and adding them to the software? Are your Sales Reps held accountable for completed membership contracts? Remember, you can't send birthday wishes if the date was not entered on the contract.

- Be judicious with your emails and mail merges. The average American receives copious amounts of Spam and junk mail each day. (Think about your own desktop!) The last thing you want is for your members to see one too many emails from your club and hit the delete button before they even open the email.

## The 8 Most Effective Mail Merges:

**1. Renewal/Update Letter:** Create a letter and mail merge to inform your paid-in-full and one-year contract members that their membership is about to expire (30-day advance notice is the standard). Suggest a free assessment to kick-off their second year. Also, contact your members with credit cards that will be expiring soon. Give members an opportunity to update their cards before incurring embarrassing late fees and red screens.

**2. Welcome Letter:** Create a new member welcome letter and have it sent out weekly to all members who joined that week. Include additional club information and any relevant information for a new member. Each Sales Rep can have a personalized template, or as the club owner, you could create and sign your own letter.

**3. Changes in Service:** When it comes to raising dues, a posted sign at the front desk just doesn't cut it. Creating a mail merge is the most effective – and efficient – way to communicate changes in service to your members. Members should be notified by mail 30 days in advance. Returned postcards due to bad addresses can be filed alphabetically as proof that you did try to contact the member.

**4. Motivational Letter for Low-Use Members:** Create a merge letter that targets your low-use members by join date. The best time to deter the attrition of a low user is at the beginning of their tenure, not after nine months into a membership they have never used. Remind them of the reasons they joined in the first place. And to be the most effective, don't forget to follow-up with a personal phone call.

**5. Rejoin Letter for Former Members:** Create a letter that targets your cancelled members with a special offer to rejoin, and send it every quarter. Communicate

to them any changes that have taken place, or the new lines of equipment and services that have been added. And as always, follow-up with a phone call.

**6. Past Due Letter:** Help your cash flow by creating a mail merge letter that targets members with a 30-, 60- or 90-day past-due balance notice.

**7. Birthday Letter:** Each week, create a Happy Birthday letter or send a Happy Birthday card to members. This is a great way to communicate with your members surrounding a happy event. For added impact, enclose a gift card for a free drink or tan.

**8. Special Interest Letters:** Create a letter and mail merge that informs your members of new services based on their interests. Send them specific offers for free classes, bios on new instructors, clinics, etc.

Most good club management programs should supply you with a mail merge/email merge component. In fact, this is crucial to an effective communications strategy. If your current software doesn't have this capability, check with your vendor to see if there is an update. If not, it may be time to see what other options are available in the marketplace.

Keep your members coming back and fully engaged in your club by appropriately timed letters, postcards and emails using your club management software system.

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