

## Membership & Retention Strategy: Oracle Applications Users Group

*The Oracle Applications Users Group (OAUG) is a global organization that enhances the capabilities of real Oracle users in their day-to-day use and management of the growing family of Oracle Applications. Formed in 1990, the OAUG is one of the software industry's most successful user groups and speaks with one voice for the family of Oracle Applications users.*

### Challenge:

Member retention decreased from the mid-80% to the low-60% range on an annual basis, resulting in a drastic decrease in revenue. The value proposition and relevancy of the organization was also being diluted in the marketplace.

### Solution:

ACI created a two-fold approach to increase member retention and help restore the OAUG brand. The two solutions included the establishment of the OAUG member care program and a 'grass roots' campaign including improved communication from the leaders of the geographical and special interest groups and coordinated presentations made by the executive director at regional events to demonstrate the relevancy of the organization and educate members about the value of their participation to the advocacy of the organization and the community.

The OAUG member care program was developed to engage both new and existing members from day one. ACI analyzed the OAUG's communications with its membership and saw that the main message being conveyed by the association was a solicitation for money, rather than a communication of the value proposition and advocacy that the organization was providing them. They were also neglecting to ask about and address member needs. Through the OAUG developed a twelve-month communication program that benchmarked the impact the organization was having on member organizations. Upon joining or renewing, the member was asked what they expected OAUG membership to provide them. At six months, the same member was asked if they had received the value they were looking for from the OAUG. Depending on their response, they then went down different communication paths until a satisfactory result was achieved. Throughout the course of a membership year, OAUG communicated with its members monthly, either benchmarking their needs and developing solution-based education or advocacy programs, or educating them on a new or existing member benefit or advocacy initiative the organization was working on with Oracle.

### For more info:

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The grass roots initiative was developed to encourage the leaders of the regional groups to become a 'sales force' for the OAUG. Various organization leaders were educated on the work of the committees, board and staff relative to key member experienced-based initiatives and solutions and education for member organizations. Monthly conference calls were conducted by the executive director to discuss these initiatives with organization leaders, and an approach focusing on two main factors was deployed. 1) Demonstrate what OAUG is doing for the member as a user or partner of Oracle products and 2) demonstrate how the OAUG connects its members with an international network of over 300,000 users and partners worldwide.

### Results:

Membership retention and acquisition increased. Retention returned to the high 80% range consistently on a monthly and annual basis and the geographical and special interest group community grew from 56 to over 135 in a three-year period, with increased attendance from these groups at events. Ultimately, this also caused attendance at the annual conference to increase 100% over a two-year period from 2,000 attendees to over 4,500 attendees.

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