

Region 3 Member Development Report
25 February 2008
Charles Lord, Member Development Chair

2008 continues to be an exciting year of change and growth in the IEEE! You will continue to hear more about the changes as they happen, particularly at the Region 3 meeting in Huntsville on April 4-6 and at Sections Congress in Quebec on September 19-22. In fact, changes are already happening quickly enough to invoke a spin on the old sports saying: “You can’t tell the Committees without a Score Card”... So, I will try to give you a small bite of the new score card.

There is already some confusion about the alphabet soup of committees regarding Membership Development, Member Development, and Membership Recruitment and Recovery – as well as the associated other committees and how they all fit together. First, I must say that the “final answer” of how everything will fit has yet to be determined, but much has been determined and I will explain it here.

The Change from the term “Membership Development” to “Member Development” is not a matter of semantics; indeed, it is a major shift in emphasis that reflects the drive of the IEEE to re-establish itself as a member-centered organization – that is, a partnership of engaged members rather than a commodity that is sold to customers that we call “members.” Therefore Member Development is charged primarily with the engagement, involvement, support, and appreciation of the Member and all potential Members. Does this mean that the ‘sales’ aspect of the former Membership Development efforts will go away? Far from it! But there are many of us that feel that a dedicated effort at truly engaging the Members as the integral makeup of the IEEE will do away with some of the current needs for concentrated sales, particularly regarding getting members to renew and stay with the IEEE. This is all a major shift and will take time to make happen. We are still defining ways of engaging members and how we look at members as something other than consumers and sales figures. Issues such as Member life cycle, currently (and masterfully) headed up by Butch Shadwell, are important for us to understand one another and how we can work together to grow the IEEE by growing one another. One aspect of this growth, Education and Training, is an area that is near and dear to me both as an IEEE volunteer and professionally as a commercial technical trainer and you will see more of this at all levels of the IEEE. And what of the sales and marketing? To provide continuity in this area so that we do not lose members though this transition time, the Member and Geographic Activities (MGA) Board has asked our Director-Elect, Lee Stogner, to help maintain the traditional “Membership Development” efforts under a new effort referred to as the Membership Recruitment and Recovery (MRR) ad-hoc committee, and our Regional Director has asked him to also continue these efforts at the regional level. As we grow our “New MD” – Member Development – we cannot ignore and in fact need to face the current issue of MRR and “the terminator” (the dropping of all 2007 IEEE members who have not renewed by the end of this month). The long-term intent is if we do our job properly in the new Member Development efforts, we can cut severely into the yearly terminator numbers and do away with the “sawtooth” or ramp function that our numbers go through every year.

So, where does that leave our network of MD chairs at the Area, Council, Section, Chapter, and Student Branch levels? Your job, and everyone's job, continues to be to help market the IEEE and, more immediately, to work with Lee to stem the tide of folks who have not renewed. Some have moved, changed careers, or passed away; but most have either forgotten or overlooked renewal or have made a conscious effort to not renew. Lee can use all of our help to help get back as many as we can. Meanwhile, you will be hearing more over the next year as to the new efforts and changes as we engage, grow, honor, and indeed touch the Member and make the IEEE, particularly here in Region 3, the shining example of a truly member-centered organization that people will join and remain with because they WANT to come with us.

As always, many many THANKS for all that each of you does for the IEEE and what we do for one another.