



Paperless Member Billing

Why Wait?

Some things never seem to change with private clubs. But paper-based member billing is one thing that should have gone out the window long ago.

Printing and mailing paper statements is a costly monthly ritual at almost every club, requiring lots of low-productivity labor hours to complete a chore that could easily be automatic. Most clubs have tried to encourage members to opt for electronic (email) statements, but only have low participation rates to show for their efforts.

The reason these efforts come up short is because they lack the three ingredients of any successful plan for change:

1) Tangible benefits to the target audience of the plan:

People resist change – any change – even if it is good for them. It’s human nature. But if you can sweeten the pie with tangible benefits for the target audience, your chances of success go way up.

The benefits of paperless billing are both financial and environmental. The financial benefits are evidenced by significant cost reductions – printing, mailing and associated labor. Reductions in paper usage that translate into fewer trees lost and a lower carbon impact on the atmosphere demonstrate the environmental benefits.

This double whammy of financial and environmental benefits is the key to getting the attention of your club’s membership. And don’t make the mistake of dismissing these savings out of hand as being minor. Even for a small club, we’re talking many thousands of dollars, many trees and tons of carbon – year in and year out!

2) A specific plan of action: To change member behavior, you’ll need an action plan. A plan with specific tasks and measurable goals. In this case, your plan should begin with a series of communication pieces to the membership emphasizing the financial and environmental merits of paperless billing. To engage your membership, you will need to set measurable goals. For example, reference the 12-month plan plan below.

3) Long-term commitment to the plan: Ah, here’s the part that escapes most clubs. To be successful you’ll need to keep the plan fresh and visible to the membership. That will require someone on your staff to “own” this project and to see it through. Or you might consider forming an ad hoc member committee to create and manage the plan.

Either way, someone must stay on it to get the intended results. And those results must be communicated regularly to the membership as a way of rewarding those who are participating and encouraging those yet to join in. Think fundraising contributions “thermometer” or something similar.

The most important element for success is to get started – now. Don’t wait for a “convenient” time, since that time never seems to arrive. Assign this project to someone today and get the ball rolling. Every day you wait is wasting money and killing more trees! **BR**

Our Club’s Goals	Participation %	\$ Savings Per Year	Trees Saved Per Year
Today	10%		
In 3 Months	25%		
In 6 Months	50%		
In 9 Months	75%		
In 12 months	90%		

You’ll need to calculate the financial and environmental savings based upon your club’s individual membership population. But that can be done rather quickly (the trees saved and carbon reduction data is all over the internet).