

IPLOCA Membership Growth & Retention Strategy

Working strategy based on the 2026 active-member list, departures since September 2024, current application forms, and association-industry research

Executive Summary

IPLOCA has demonstrated that it can attract new members. The strategic opportunity is to make recruitment more selective and to convert more new members into engaged, long-term participants. The departure data supplied for this review contains 24 recorded resignations, with a pronounced concentration in the early membership years, alongside a smaller group of very long-tenured departures. The recommended direction is therefore not to reduce recruitment, but to manage membership as one connected lifecycle: identify gaps, recruit for a reason, capture expectations at application, activate the member quickly, connect them personally at events, and monitor engagement through the first five years.

The central recommendation is to give recruitment and retention equal strategic importance while concentrating retention effort on the first five years. Success should be measured not only by new members added, but also by 1-, 3-, and 5-year retention, meaningful engagement, and the strategic gaps filled by new recruits.

1. What the Current Data Suggests (I obtained from Sebastien)

The departure file lists 24 resignations from September 2024 onward. The tenure distribution is more informative than the simple average: many departures occurred early, while a handful of 12- to 33-year members pull the average upward. This makes the median and the share leaving within five years more useful management indicators than average tenure alone.

Observation	What it means	Strategic response
Early-tenure departures are concentrated in the first five years	The association may be recruiting successfully without fully activating some new members	Create a deliberate first-five-year member journey
Some departures are very long-tenured	Not every resignation is a preventable retention failure and may be due to several factors as change or insolvency of companies, strategy, etc.	Segment normal lifecycle exits from preventable disengagement. So no Action Plan for now for these types of members.
Regular and Associate members both appear in departures.	Retention cannot be treated as a single member-type issue	Track retention by member type, cohort, geography and engagement
Current data does not consistently record exit reasons	IPLOCA cannot yet distinguish value problems from mergers, market exits or other causes	Introduce standardized exit reason codes and short exit interviews

2. Strategic Framework: Recruit -> Onboard -> Activate -> Retain

The proposed model treats recruitment and retention as one process. A company should be approached because IPLOCA has a reason to want its participation; once it joins, that same reason should be used to connect it to people, programs and opportunities.

Recruit strategically

Map geographic and capability gaps (Partially done by Membership Committee in 2026), identify companies that fill those gaps, and tailor the invitation around the contribution IPLOCA wants from them and the value they can gain.

Onboard intentionally

Use the application and approval process to identify the company's objectives, primary representative, additional contacts, expertise and potential contribution.

Activate quickly

Within the first 90 days, connect the member to relevant people, committees, technical activities and an event opportunity. Do not rely on welcome emails alone or LinkedIn posts.

Retain through engagement

Track participation through Years 1-5, intervene before disengagement becomes resignation, and show the company the value it has received and contributed before renewal.

3. Recruitment: Fill Gaps, Not Just Seats

The Membership Committee should supplement its numerical recruitment target with a strategic-gap target. The active-member list shows strong representation in traditional pipeline construction, equipment, welding/coating, major contractors and Western markets. As already determined, we lack geographical presence from of Asia and Far East members. As for expertise, I have come across a few areas where we don't have much expertise: digital construction, geospatial/field data, automation, energy-transition pipeline capabilities, and selected underrepresented disciplines. You have already come up with a list of the areas we need to target (Valve, fittings, etc... companies. We can map it out current membership structure and determine the "gaps" for a more complete list.

Recommended annual Membership Gap Map:

- Geography: Europe, North America, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, India/South Asia, China, Southeast Asia and Australia.
- Capability: contractors, owners/operators, pipe, equipment, welding, coating, inspection/NDT, HDD/trenchless, engineering/EPC, digital construction, survey/GIS, automation/robotics, environmental, logistics, offshore, hydrogen, CO2/CCS and other emerging technologies.
- Target: identify the white spaces and recruit companies that can fill them.

Process Flow: Membership gaps identified → target companies selected → tailored approach → company understands why IPLOCA wants them → application → new capability/geography added to IPLOCA

4. Regional Event Partnerships / Partnership-Led Recruitment

Use reciprocal partnerships with established or emerging pipeline events as low-cost membership-development channels in strategically important regions. IPLOCA could offer access to its international network and promotional channels in exchange for in-kind visibility and access, rather than defaulting to paid sponsorship.

- The purpose is not simply to obtain a free booth or space on events. Before each event, the Membership Committee should identify non-member companies attending that fill geographic or capability gaps, arrange targeted meetings where possible, and measure whether the partnership generates applications and engaged members.
- Potential reciprocal benefits include supporting-association status, logo/website visibility, complimentary registrations, a small membership booth/table, speaking or panel opportunities, and targeted networking access.

PTC Asia — Kuala Lumpur | Asia / Southeast Asia

High-priority partnership. The second PTC Asia takes place 24–26 November 2026 in Kuala Lumpur. Its early stage and ambition to become Asia's pipeline technology hub may give IPLOCA an opportunity to establish a meaningful reciprocal relationship while using the event to identify prospects across Southeast Asia and the wider region.

Rio Pipeline & Logistics — Rio de Janeiro | Latin America

Use Rio Pipeline as a Latin America membership-development platform, particularly for Brazil and neighboring markets. The next edition is scheduled for 14–16 September 2027. Its technical, strategic, young-professional and innovation programming creates opportunities for recruitment and for connecting IPLOCA with companies and capabilities underrepresented in the association.

International Pipeline Conference & Expo (IPCE) — Calgary | Canada / North America

Use IPCE as a technical and relationship-building platform in Canada and the broader international pipeline community. IPCE 2026 is scheduled for 21–26 September 2026 in Calgary and is a mature biennial conference with participation from more than 44 countries. Because it is established, IPLOCA may have less leverage for no-cost exposure than with PTC Asia; any partnership should be negotiated around clear reciprocal value.

Partnership scorecard

- Access to companies in a geographic or capability gap.
- Value of reciprocal exposure compared with direct cost.
- Priority prospects identified before the event and targeted meetings held.
- Applications or qualified membership leads generated.
- New members ultimately joined and their 1-, 3- and 5-year retention.

Process Flow: Strategic region identified → relevant event selected → reciprocal partnership → target companies identified before event → meetings/introductions → membership follow-up → new members recruited

⇒ HERE IS WHERE THE NEW COMMITTEE WORK STARTS: “RETENTION” !

(WE BROUGHT AROUND 30 NEW MEMBERS DURING THE 2-YEAR PERIOD BUT LOST 24. A NET 6 MEMBER GAIN ONLY.).

5. Retention Begins at the Application

The current Associate Member application is effective as a qualification and compliance document, but it does not capture enough information about why the company wants to join, who will engage, or how it could contribute. A short engagement section should be added without making the application burdensome.

Suggested “Addition” to the Application Template:

PRIMARY IPLOCA REPRESENTATIVE

Please identify the person who will be your company's primary contact and representative within IPLOCA.

Name:

Title:

Email:

ADDITIONAL IPLOCA CONTACT

We encourage members to involve more than one person from their organization.

Name:

Title/Department:

Email:

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN OBJECTIVES IN JOINING IPLOCA?

Select all that apply:

- Networking with pipeline contractors and industry peers
- Technical knowledge / best-practice exchange
- Business development / industry exposure
- Participation in committees or working groups
- HSE / sustainability initiatives
- Innovation / new technology
- Young professionals / workforce development
- Participation in IPLOCA events and Convention
- Other: _____

AREAS WHERE YOUR COMPANY COULD CONTRIBUTE TO IPLOCA

Add structured Industry Expertise / Capabilities:

Pipeline Construction | Offshore | Engineering/EPC | HDD/Trenchless | Welding | Coating | Inspection/NDT | Pipe Manufacturing | Construction Equipment | Survey/GIS | Digital Construction | Automation/Robotics | HSE | Environmental | Logistics | Hydrogen | CO2/CCS | Other

Process Flow: Company applies → objectives identified → capabilities recorded → primary/additional representatives identified → potential contribution identified → information transferred into onboarding

Use Recommenders or Membership Committee Members as Connectors

Associate applicants already require recommendations from two qualified Regular Members. Where practical, one of the recommending members could serve as the new member's initial IPLOCA Connector (also Host) during the first year. Alternatively, a Membership Committee member may be assigned, particularly where there is a good geographic, business or industry fit. The role should remain simple and informal: welcome the new member, make relevant introductions, help identify appropriate IPLOCA activities and provide a familiar point of contact during the first year. The recommender is a natural first choice when actively engaged; otherwise, an appropriate Membership Committee member should be assigned.

Process Flow: Member approved → appropriate Connector selected → personal introduction → member interests reviewed → relevant people/activities identified → ongoing first-year point of contact

6. The First-Year Experience

The first year should have an explicit objective: get the company to experience IPLOCA rather than merely receive communications from IPLOCA. Association research supports structured first-year onboarding, personalized value delivery and early activation rather than treating renewal as an end-of-year administrative event.

Timing	Objective	Action	Owner
Application / approval	Understand	Capture objectives, expertise, primary and additional contacts	Secretariat / Membership
Days 1-30	Welcome & connect	Personal welcome call; assign Board/Member Host; identify relevant opportunities	Host + Secretariat
Days 30-90	Activate	Make 3-5 targeted introductions; connect to committee/technical activity; identify first event	Host + Committee
Months 3-6	Participate	Ensure at least one meaningful activity beyond receiving communications (Attendance to any of the Regional or Novel Construction, Webinars, introduce their HSE manager to IPLOCA's HSE activities or their technical manager to the relevant technical group, etc.)	Membership Committee
First Convention/event	Belong	Event incentive; Board Host; strategic introductions; distributed dinner seating	Board + Membership
Month 6	Check value	Ask whether IPLOCA is delivering against the reasons stated on the application	Secretariat / Host
Months 9-12	Demonstrate value	Provide a short participation/value summary before renewal	Secretariat

Process Flow: Member approved → welcome contact → Connector assigned → targeted introductions → active involvement → first event → 6-month check-in → first renewal

7. First Convention / Event Activation

A major event such as the general convention can be the moment a new company becomes part of the IPLOCA community. However, the first-time experience begins before the attendee arrives at the Convention. The registration process, understanding how the Convention is structured, and deciding which activities to attend can be overwhelming for someone participating for the first time.

A Membership Committee member, ideally the new member's assigned IPLOCA Connector, should make themselves available during the Convention registration period to assist first-time attendees from newer member companies. This does not need to be a formal concierge service, but rather a personal contact who can explain how the Convention works, answer questions about registration and help the attendee identify activities that are most relevant to their interests and objectives.

Once at the Convention, the existing First-Time Attendee Cocktail should be used as an intentional connection opportunity (make sure new company's representatives registers for the first time attendees event) . New-member representatives should be identified in advance, and their IPLOCA Connector, Board members and Membership Committee members should make targeted introductions based on the member's business, geography and interests. Where practical, each new-member representative should be introduced to at least three relevant established members.

These initial connections should then be reinforced throughout the Convention, including through strategic dinner seating with Board members or experienced members. Following the Convention, the Connector should follow up with the attendee and help turn the introductions and activities from the event into continued involvement with IPLOCA.

Process Flow: First-time attendee identified → Connector contacts attendee before registration → registration/activity-selection support → First-Time Attendee Cocktail → targeted introductions → strategic dinner seating/networking → post-Convention follow-up

Convention Registration Incentive - Pilot Recommendation

New member companies may face their highest IPLOCA-related costs during their first year, with membership fees, Convention registration of approximately **USD 2,700 per attendee**, and travel expenses occurring at the same time we are trying to encourage their involvement.

As a pilot, IPLOCA could offer newly admitted paying members a **Buy One, Get One complimentary Convention registration** during their first year. In addition to reducing the initial financial burden, this would encourage companies to involve more than one representative from the start, helping build broader relationships within the association rather than relying on a single contact.

The pilot should be evaluated based on participation, subsequent engagement and renewal before considering it as a permanent benefit.

Recommended pilot:

- Offer one complimentary “Buy one get one” or substantially discounted second registration to the designated representative of a defined new-member cohort.
- Require pre-event onboarding and Board/Member Host assignment so the incentive buys engagement, not simply attendance.
- Measure event attendance, number of meaningful interactions/activities, first renewal and subsequent engagement against prior cohorts.
- After one or two cohorts, decide whether the benefit should be permanent, discounted, conditional or discontinued.

Process Flow: New paying member joins → first Convention identified → company purchases one registration → second registration complimentary → two company representatives participate → broader company engagement → renewal/retention measured.

8. Years 2-5: Prevent Quiet Disengagement

- Create an at-risk indicator for members with no meaningful participation over the previous 12 months.
- Schedule a specific touchpoint around Years 2-3, before the period where early departures become more common.
- Develop more than one contact inside each member company so membership does not depend on a single internal champion.
- Invite newer members to contribute with: panels, Novel, Safety, technical articles, webinars, committees, and regional initiatives.
- Before renewal, provide a concise 'Your Year with IPLOCA' summary showing participation, connections and opportunities.
- Escalate disengaged members for personal outreach before the renewal invoice becomes the first serious contact of the year.

Process Flow: Engagement monitored → low/no activity identified → Connector/Committee outreach → member's original objectives revisited → relevant opportunity offered → additional company contacts involved → renewal

9. Event Attendance Among Departing Members

The updated departure file adds attendance records for the 2024-2026 Spring/Fall Sessions, Conventions and selected Regional Meetings. This provides a useful additional signal: **many departing members had little or no recorded participation in these events.**

Of the 24 departing members, 15 (62.5%) show no recorded attendance at any of the listed events during the available observation period. Among the 14 members that left within five years of joining, 9 (64.3%) show no recorded attendance. Only 5 of those 14 early-tenure departures attended at least one listed event.

Group	Members	No recorded event attendance	Attended ≥1 listed event
All departures	24	15 (62.5%)	9 (37.5%)
Departed within 5 years	14	9 (64.3%)	5 (35.7%)
Departed after 5 years	10	6 (60.0%)	4 (40.0%)

This supports the strategy's concern about activation, but it does not prove that low event attendance caused resignation. The comparison is limited to members who left; we do not yet have equivalent attendance data for members who stayed. We are working only on this last 2-year time frame but if we want a more consistent analysis maybe we can request from IPLOCA Secretariat a broader list of event member admissions and resignations for past years, attendance for further analysis. The available event window differs by resignation date, so a member resigning in 2024 had fewer observable opportunities than a member remaining through 2026.

The practical implication is to treat event participation as an early-warning indicator rather than as a proven causal factor. For new members, IPLOCA should actively target attendance at at least one meaningful event during the first membership year and track the result. For all members in Years 1-5, no event attendance or other meaningful engagement over a rolling 12-month period should trigger personal outreach before renewal.

Recommended next measurement: compare first-year and first-three-year event participation for members who remain active versus those who resign. That control group would allow IPLOCA to test whether event participation is actually associated with higher retention and would provide stronger evidence for continuing, modifying or ending the proposed Convention-registration incentive.

Process Flow: Attendance and engagement tracked → 12 months with little/no participation → member flagged → personal outreach → barriers identified → reconnection opportunity → retention outcome monitored

10. Measurement & KPIs

The Board should see a small membership dashboard rather than only gross joins and resignations.

KPI	Why it matters
New members added	Measures acquisition
Net membership change	Prevents gross recruitment from masking losses
1-year retention by joining cohort	Tests onboarding effectiveness
3-year retention by joining cohort	Tests whether members become established
5-year retention by joining cohort	Core early-life retention measure
% of first-year members attending an event	Tests activation
% of first-year members with ≥ 1 meaningful engagement	Tests whether membership is being used
Members with multiple company contacts	Reduces single-contact dependency
Retention by member type and geography	Identifies structural weak points
Strategic gaps filled	Measures quality of recruitment, not only quantity
Exit reason distribution	Separates preventable from unavoidable departures
Event participation among Years 1-5 members	Provides an early engagement signal and allows future testing of the relationship between event participation and retention

Process Flow: New member joins → participation recorded → 1-year retention → 3-year retention → 5-year retention → results compared by joining year/member type/region → strategy adjusted

11. Exit Learning

Introduce a simple standardized exit process. Every resignation should receive a primary reason code (for example: value/engagement, cost, merger/acquisition, business exit, management change, market conditions, no relevant activity, other) plus a short comment. This should be reviewed annually by the Membership Committee. The objective is not to pressure every departing member to stay, but to learn which departures could have been prevented.

12. Recommended Priorities

Priority 1 - Build the first-year journey: Application changes, named representative, welcome call, Host, first event, six-month check-in.

Priority 2 - Start measuring cohorts: Track 1-, 3- and 5-year retention and meaningful engagement.

Priority 3 - Pilot the Convention incentive: Test one cohort before committing to a permanent benefit.

Priority 4 - Build the Membership Gap Map: Use geography and capability to select recruitment targets.

Priority 5 - Develop regional event partnerships: Pilot reciprocal membership-development partnerships with PTC Asia, Rio Pipeline & Logistics and IPCE Calgary, supported by target-company lists and measurable recruitment outcomes.

Priority 6 - Introduce exit reasons and at-risk monitoring: Create the feedback loop needed to improve the strategy each year.

13. Proposed Membership Committee Mandate

Recommended principle: Recruit for a reason. Engage from the beginning. Measure whether members stay.

The next Membership Committee should continue pursuing new members, particularly in strategically underrepresented regions and capabilities, while taking explicit responsibility for early-life engagement and retention. The Committee should not be judged solely by how many companies join during its term, but by whether new members become active participants and whether the overall membership becomes more representative of the pipeline construction industry's evolving skills and geography.

Process Flow: Identify the gap → recruit with purpose → understand why they joined → assign a Connector → remove first-year barriers → create meaningful connections → maintain engagement through Years 1–5 → identify disengagement early → retain where possible → learn from those who leave → improve the next member's journey.