1. Hold an open house – New members may feel intimidated by board meetings, so perhaps rebrand a board meeting or mixer as an open house to introduce new members to your club. Timing is important, so consider holding the open house in the beginning of the school year to build on football-season momentum or at another time when people are looking to get more involved.

2. Leverage existing USC Alumni Association programs – Use events like the USC Women’s Conference, USC Alumni Day of Service and Reunion Weekend as “entry points” into the Trojan Family and your organization.

3. Ask people to get involved – If you don’t ask for the help you need (whether it be to fill a board position or put together gift bags), you may not get it. Additionally, don’t feel you need to take on everything yourself. Use one-off volunteer assistance as an opportunity to get to know someone and build on their greater involvement. Just start small so you don’t overwhelm new volunteers.

4. Follow up after an event – It’s great that you had a new person come to your event, but how are you ensuring that they come to the next one? Have you thought about sending them a personal note to invite them to your next club program or meeting? Taking 10 minutes the day after your event to personally follow up with event attendees can make all the difference.

5. Use social media wisely – Make sure you’re not over-posting on Facebook and LinkedIn. Think about the content of the post carefully. Is this interesting or important? When did the last message go out? Conversely, if you don’t have any content or don’t know what to post, visit the USC Alumni Association pages to pull content and share it on your page.

6. Tell the local Trojan story – Even if you don’t have an event coming up, don’t lose an opportunity to communicate to your constituents. Take the time to highlight the story of a local Trojan, Trojan-owned business (perhaps one your club frequents for events) or scholarship recipient. And you don’t need to be original, think about a recap of an interesting story from USC News.

7. Maximize your board members at events – Make sure your volunteers are using events to meet new people and learn something about them. The more the guest feels welcome and appreciated, the more likely they will come to your next event or get involved on a deeper level. If a Board of Governors member or other alumni leader is visiting your region, enlist them as goodwill ambassadors.

8. Make sure there’s time to network – If you’re buying group tickets to an event, make sure there’s a pre or post reception where Trojans can meet and interact on a social level.

9. Go where the Millennials go – If you want to attract recent graduates, find out what they are already doing and build a USC-themed event around that activity (i.e., an outdoor music festival or comedy performance). Manage your expectations with this group – many will not RSVP until 24 hours before your event or will show up expecting to pay at the door.
Highlight your city – Architectural or foodie tours work well, and allow transplants to get to know their new home accompanied by local Trojans. Think about planning events like these in the fall to hook new grads.

Don’t recreate the wheel – Utilize USC Alumni Association resources, Facebook Idea Exchange and your peer Club Network to find out what’s worked and what hasn’t. You’re not alone, and chances are, if you thought of it, someone else has already tried it and may have some great advice.

Keep current – Make sure your social media pages and website are up to date. Photos should be posted within two days of the event. If someone comes to a website that hasn’t been updated in 6 months, it will appear that your club is not active.

Evaluate – Take time to look at what you’re doing and see where you can improve. Just because your club has done the same signature events for years, doesn’t mean they are the most effective now. Keep it fresh and relevant.

Personalize communications – Target your constituency with an occasional phone call or a personal note to invite them to a special event you think they may be particularly interested in. Let them know that you remember them, and that you look forward to seeing them again.

Provide industry or professional programming – Think about regular or annual events that focus on professional programming or target a certain industry, such as media or law. Contact speakers in that field that will be a draw (they may or may not be Trojans). Utilize local resources such as the Better Business Bureau or the Career Center website for instructions on planning your own career-related event and archived webinars on career-related topics and tips that you can share with your members.

Don’t get bogged down by fundraising – Keep the focus on engaging more alumni, not on raising scholarship funds. Use fundraising as one piece of the engagement puzzle and not the overall focus.

Keep your programming varied to attract a wider audience – Have a mix of “CSP” - cultural, social and philanthropic events.

Diversify your board – Make sure your board reflects the constituents you want to engage. Consider adding board positions as interest grows to actively engage more alumni, such as a “Constituent Relations Chair” charged with following up with event attendees, or more specifically, a Young Alumni or Half Century Trojan representative on the board to be the liaison to that constituency and advise on programming and communications.

Know the general demographics of the alumni in your region – The USC Alumni Association can pull general information on your constituents, such as graduation year, school and zip code. This will be helpful in crafting your engagement strategy.

Be a resource, not a hiring manager – Many times clubs will be contacted by people in search of a job in their city. Don’t feel obligated to be a placement service, but at the same time, don’t ignore the request. Offer to speak with them on the phone or meet them for coffee. Use this as an opportunity to engage a new community member.