“HOW TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN ORGANIZATION MEMBERS”

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**OPPORTUNITY**
Does being a member allow people to learn, have fun and make a difference?

**PERCEPTION**
Does your reputation encourage members to become active?

**COMMUNICATION**
Does your message appeal to members and inspire them?

**EXPERIENCE**
Does the quality of the experience compel members to be active?
OPPORTUNITY

What Opportunities Attract Members

Look over the list of reasons why people become members

Check ☑ the items that are true for why you became a member.

| ☐ Serve the industry | ☐ Identify with a cause |
| ☐ Create change | ☐ Work on a state issue |
| ☐ Be with people | ☐ Learn about the community |
| ☐ Network with others | ☐ Promote the industry |
| ☐ Learn about industry changes | ☐ Improve status |
| ☐ Update skills and experience | ☐ Create excitement |
| ☐ Feel needed or important | ☐ Work with youth |
| ☐ Be creative | ☐ Share in family activities |
| ☐ Work on a local issue | ☐ Look for a significant relationship |
| ☐ Serve the community | ☐ Conform to peer pressure |
| ☐ Use skills and experience | ☐ Serve as a resource |
| ☐ Have fun | ☐ Escape boredom and routine |
| ☐ Receive recognition | ☐ Work with friends |
| ☐ Help a friend or relative | ☐ Prepare for future positions |
| ☐ Fulfill a duty | ☐ Work on a national issue |
| ☐ Express concern about an issue | ☐ Be close to the action |
| ☐ Accept a challenge | ☐ Travel |
| ☐ Accomplish something constructive | ☐ Give back to the organization |
| ☐ Establish peer relationships | ☐ Asked by someone you respect |
| ☐ Improve self | ☐ Other: ____________________ |
OPPORTUNITY

- Assign a greeter to welcome people to meetings.
- Individually introduce new members to others.
- Call new members to encourage them to come to the next meeting.
- Set money aside to support new projects.
- Take time to listen to members.
- Encourage new members to attend the annual meeting. Cover all, or part, of their expenses.
- Keep members up to date on state and national issues.
- Create a list of all the different ways to become active
- Establish an online chat room for members to discuss policy issues.
- Match members with positions that fit their interests.
- Send draft agendas a week before the meeting.
- Schedule good entertainment for big events.
- Publicize major events or meetings several months in advance.
- Give members the opportunity to travel to attend state and national meetings.
- Provide programs and activities the whole family can enjoy.
- Keep your Web site up to date.
- Provide child care at meetings.
- Hold a reception for new members prior to the annual meeting.
- Develop a clear program of work each year so members know the major activities for the coming year.
## PERCEPTION

**What are Members’ Perceptions about Opportunities?**

Look at the list of opportunities in the first column. Put a check in the column that best reflects what members think about getting involved with each opportunity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>There’s value in doing it.</th>
<th>It’s hit or miss.</th>
<th>If I don’t do it, who will?</th>
<th>I don’t know how to get started.</th>
<th>It’s a waste of time.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Officers</td>
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<td>Board of Directors</td>
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<td>Policy Development</td>
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<td>Training Meetings</td>
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<td>Monthly Meetings</td>
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<td>Promotion &amp; Education Programs</td>
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<td>Local Affairs</td>
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<td>Member Services</td>
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<td>Annual Meeting</td>
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<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
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<td>Information/Media Relations</td>
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<td>Safety Programs</td>
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<td>Organizational Trips</td>
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<td>Annual Picnic</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</table>
PERCEPTION

- Publicize the positive impact your organization is having on the community.
- Share good news, such as membership growth, with all members.
- Encourage members to serve in local government and other prominent community positions.
- Encourage projects in your local schools.
- Be active in local policy issues.
- Hold a membership drive where visit potential members and ask them to join.
- Purchase ads in community publications and school programs.
- Recruit local businesses in your industry to join, and then give them membership stickers for store windows.
- Invite local businesses to attend annual meeting.
- Use the logo to help people recognize programs and projects.
- Host an event at the local shopping mall to promote strong relationships between rural and urban communities.
- Form a communications committee to monitor local papers and write letters to the editor.
- Invite elected officials to attend your annual meeting.
- Give new members hats or shirts to wear to help promote your industry.
Before potential members will commit their time, money and energy, potential members need to understand the clear and relevant benefit their contribution will have. Most people are taught to sell involvement by telling others why they are members. However, this strategy isn’t always successful because people have different *Motivations*. If you don’t share the same motivations as a potential member, your attempts to sell that person on becoming a member may have the opposite effect. Instead of attracting members, you may be pushing them away.

Hi, my name is _________________.
I wanted to introduce myself and welcome you.

- What line of work are you in?
- What other organizations are you a member of?
- What other things do you enjoy doing in your free time?
- Why did you come here this evening?
COMMUNICATION

- Give names and contact information, along with a committee’s action plan, to each committee member.

- Spend a few minutes at each meeting recognizing and thanking new members.

- Send new members a packet detailing member benefits and opportunities.

- Get input from members about how meetings should be structured and how to ensure participation from everyone.

- Make an appointment with a prospective volunteer to discuss a new volunteer opportunity.

- Tell prospects why you think they’d be good for the organization.

- Ask members about their goals and interests so you can match them with appropriate roles for organization.

- Develop and maintain project files to pass along to new members.

- Spread the word about your organization by telling outsiders about the great things the organization is doing.

- Produce a professional looking newsletter full of good information.

- Build relationships with local papers to help get media coverage organization.

- Give members a realistic idea of volunteer opportunities.

- Personally ask members what the organization could do to help them.

- When discussing an opportunity, highlight the benefits they will receive.

- Check in with new members and make sure they are satisfied with their experience so far.
COMMUNICATION

OPENING:
TO OPEN A CONVERSATION:

- GIVE POSITIVE EYE CONTACT
- A FIRM HAND SHAKE
- SMILE AND EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES

PROBING:
YOU ASK WHEN YOU WANT TO RETRIEVE INFORMATION FROM A MEMBER.

- USE OPEN AND CLOSED QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE THE PERSON’S
  - CIRCUMSTANCES
  - INTERNAL MOTIVATION AND NEEDS

SUPPORTING
SUPPORTING IS THE SKILL YOU USE TO COMMUNICATE THE WAY’S YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN PROVIDE THE SOLUTION TO FILL THE INTERNAL MOTIVATIONS AND NEEDS TO SATISFY THEM ON BECOMING A MEMBER.

YOU SUPPORT WHEN:

- THE PERSON HAS EXPRESSED AN INTERNAL MOTIVATION.
  AND
- YOU CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE NEED.
  AND
- YOU KNOW THE ORGANIZATION CAN ADDRESS THE INTERNAL MOTIVATION.

HOW TO SUPPORT

CLOSING
WHEN

- THE MEMBER SIGNALS A READINESS TO MOVE AHEAD
OR
- THE MEMBER HAS ACCEPTED THE BENEFITS YOU’VE DESCRIBED

HOW TO CLOSE
COMMUNICATION

• Be Yourself

Each individual working is different. People must be comfortable with themselves. Don’t worry about being too nervous or not knowledgeable. Just be yourself.

• Do Not Make the Prospect Uncomfortable

Do not try to shame, dominate or coerce the prospect into a membership. Generally, this approach does not work and the new member might not renew the following year.

• Try To Be Brief

Everyone is busy, so time is your worst enemy. Casual conversation may be necessary to make the prospect comfortable, but try to keep it brief. If it appears the prospect is getting restless, try to sum up quickly. Time is important to you too. Sign your neighbor as soon as possible. You have other people to see!

• Don’t Put It Off

Visit your prospects as soon as possible, usually within three days is a good rule of thumb.

• Always Assume Your Prospect Will Join!

A positive, enthusiastic attitude goes a long way to signing a member. Be sure you give each person a positive and definite invitation to join.
COMMUNICATION

Feel * Felt * Found

Practice using the Three Fs Technique by completing the following sentences.

1. The prospect says that it is a lot of money!
   I know how you feel. I felt the same way at first, but I found
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. The prospect says that he doesn’t like the organization’s policies.
   I know how you feel. When I first heard of some of the policies I felt the same way, however I found
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. The prospect says she is a member of another similar organization.
   I know how you feel. I felt the same way myself at first, but I found
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. The prospect says she doesn’t have time to participate.
   I know how you feel. I felt just like that myself, but I found
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. What other objections have you heard? How would you respond?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
**EXPERIENCE**

**Can you make being a new member a great Experience?**

Think of an event or activity your organization is planning in the next few months. If you can’t think of one, choose one of the following: summer picnic, annual meeting, policy development meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event #1:_____________________</th>
<th>Event #2:_____________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member’s Need</strong></td>
<td><strong>How you’ll meet it</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To feel welcomed</td>
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<tr>
<td>To feel like an active participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>To feel like it mattered that I was here</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EXPERIENCE

- Schedule quality educational sessions for members.
- Provide members with practical ideas they can use.
- Pair new volunteers with seasoned ones during events.
- Mail thank-you notes to volunteers.
- Introduce new members to others who will be doing similar jobs.
- Take care of volunteers by bringing them food or drinks if you see they have worked long hours.
- Give members a special name tag to recognize them.
- Put a thank-you flier under the volunteer’s windshield wiper.
- Nominate county projects for state and national award programs.
- Tie balloons to volunteers’ chairs at the annual meeting.
- Go out of your way to introduce yourself to new members.
- Make a point of remembering the names of new members.
- Make events fun!
- Start and end meetings on time.
- Make others feel like their ideas are welcomed and appreciated.
- Call new members to thank them for joining and to see if they have any questions.
- Have a good speaker at your meetings.
- Collaborate with neighboring counties to sponsor events.
- Plan mixers at events to help people get to know each other.
- Provide a great door prize at meetings.