

Recruiting and Retaining Members

Organizations are only as alive and productive as their membership. And, as members graduate or decided to leave a group, efforts to recruit “new blood” should be made. Not only do new members help replace outgoing members, they also enhance the organization by providing new ideas and energy. So what are you doing to recruit and retain members for the groups that you participate in?

Why Do People Join?

The first step in recruiting new members is understanding *why* people are motivated to join in the first place. The list is long, but here are a few possible reasons: socialization, friendships, experience, personal interests, skill development, recognition, leadership opportunities, and to make a difference.

Recruitment Process

Word of mouth is a great way to recruit new members, but it can't be the only method you rely on! Consider adapting these five simple steps into your group's recruitment plan:

1. **Evaluation**—What have you done in the past for recruitment? What worked and what didn't work? What were your final membership numbers under your current plan?
2. **Recruitment Goals**—How many members did you lose in the past semester or year? What is your ideal membership goal? How many new members do you want to recruit?
3. **Membership Benefits**—What will students get out of their membership? What does your group



Take some time
to keep in Mind ...

of new members. Everyone likes to feel like they are memorable, and someone calling you by name is the first step in feeling valued.

...the names of your new members. One of the most effective retention efforts you can make is remembering the names

offer that is different or unique? What rewards will be received after one, two or three years of membership?

4. Getting the Word Out—

What strategies can you use to promote your group? How can you invite students to check

you out? Who do your current members know that they can make contact with?

5. **Welcoming Potential Members**—What are some extra special things you can do to make potential members feel welcome and wanted in your group? What events could you create just for new members? How can current members be a part of the welcoming process?

10 Retention Realities

Retention of current members should be given just as much attention as recruiting new members. And, the reality is, the more members you keep, the fewer you will have to recruit! Consider these realities in retaining your members:

1. Conduct consistent meetings
2. Provide ongoing communication and updates
3. Facilitate collaborative decision-making
4. Emphasize a group vision, goals and expectations
5. Actively welcome new ideas and perspectives
6. Offer opportunities for leadership
7. Recognize individual and group accomplishments
8. Delegate responsibilities across the membership
9. Mediate controversy with civility
10. Celebrate and have fun

Retention Reminder

Check in with members regularly. See if they are being fulfilled through their participation with the group, if they are looking for new challenges, or if they are feeling overwhelmed with responsibility. Let them know they matter!