

Recruiting New Members

New members are the life of any organization. Everyone wants new members. New organizations are starting all the time and as the number of student groups increase, the competition for new members intensifies. This handout is designed to help your group successfully recruit and retain new members.

GETTING STARTED

The first step to take in planning a recruitment drive is to look at your organization: ***you have to know the product before you can sell it.*** The best way to run an unsuccessful campaign is to be unsure of the goals and objectives of your own group. What is your purpose? What are the future plans of the group? Knowing the answers to these questions will help you define who and how to recruit prospective members.

Build a profile of the person you want to recruit: Freshman? Grad student? Male or female? What major? Interests or hobbies? A residence hall? A particular college or department? What medium will most likely appeal to this person? Posters? Music? Keep this profile in mind when you advertise.

Think of the things your organization has to offer to prospective members. Fun? Prestige? Leadership possibilities? Developing interpersonal skills? ***Be sure to incorporate what you have to offer into your publicity.***

PUBLICITY

The publicity for your recruitment drive will require your best effort in many areas, including creativity, budgeting, and time management. Do not be afraid to delegate authority. Organize committees for publicity and other areas. Get the whole group involved: the group will work better if everyone is given a role in planning and implementing the drive. ***A satisfied customer is your best advertising***—if your members are pleased with your organization (and their role in it), they will do a much better job of selling the product.

Be Creative. Your publicity is more likely to be effective if it is noticed. Make a realistic budget and stick to it. Any publicity must be cost-effective to be successful. Write out a time-line of all deadlines to be met—be sure to plan the entire campaign well in advance (e.g., when is the deadline for getting the publicity to the printer so that it gets back to us in time?).

KEEPING YOUR PRIZE...RETAINING YOUR MEMBERS

Above all, your new members (like your old members) will need to feel like they belong in the group. Get them involved in the workings of the organization. Get to know them. Help them get to know the organization. Let them know that their contributions are needed and appreciated. Following these steps will lead to a more enjoyable and rewarding experience for both the new members and for the organization.

REMEMBER: A group with no members has short meetings!

Adapted from Leadersheets, University of Alabama

Components of a Successful Recruitment Campaign

1. Recruitment should be personal.

Recruit by word of mouth, one-to-one interaction, use of faculty and staff, and creative publicity. Know that people are not necessarily coming to you. Imagine if the BGSU football team recruited by hanging up fliers and sending out some messages via the marketing listproc. They probably would not have a very good team!

2. Recruitment should be systemic.

It must be organized, logical, well-timed, and efficient. Plan for fall recruitment in the spring and for spring recruitment by Thanksgiving.

3. Recruitment should be specific.

Identify a target group. Identify needs and motivation. Know what you have to offer.

4. Recruitment should be meaningful.

It should fulfill the needs of the members as well as the organization.

5. Recruitment should be year round.

It does not end after an increase in committee attendance has been accomplished. Recruitment must be continuous, developing the students to their fullest potential.

6. Recruitment must be the responsibility of all members.

Too often potential members leave committees after a few weeks because they feel unwelcome. Every member must welcome new recruits with open arms and a smile.

Remember this simple 5 step process when recruiting

1. Meet a person.
2. Be intentional in forming a friendship with the person.
3. Introduce the person to your friends in the organization.
4. Introduce the person to the organization.
5. Ask the person to join the organization.