

Recruiting New Members and Keeping the Ones You've Got

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New members create a spark that keeps an organization alive and insures continuity and vitality in the future. No matter whether an organization is new or has been in existence for years, there's always a need to add new members.

The Independent Sector Gallop Survey reported 62.8 million Americans, or 25.3 percent of the adult population, gave 7.9 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$184 billion in 2014. So with this large amount of volunteers, why does it seem so difficult to recruit new members? The biggest reason why people don't become members is because they say "Nobody asked me!"

In 2015, the Independent Sector estimated the value of a volunteer hour at \$23.56. This hourly value is based on the average hourly earnings of all non-agricultural workers as determined by the US Bureau of Labor Sector increases this average hourly rate by 12% to include fringe benefits. So where can you find volunteers and who are they? Volunteers are Retirees, new community members, family single parents, former members and youth groups.

Where do we find Volunteers?

- Next door
- Neighborhood
- Family
- Other organizations
- Mall or shopping centers
- County Fair
- Health Fair
- Schools/Colleges
- Daycare
- Church
- Work

You may ask why would anyone want to volunteer for our group or organization? People need a feeling of accomplishment, knowledge, self-esteem, need to fulfill educational desires, to gain recognition, address an issue, or to get continuing education units.

To help gain members offer incentives. Research by John Keller has resulted in the ARCS Motivation Theory. Even through this theory is used for motivating students in a class setting, it can also be used here. In Keller's ARCS theory A stands for Attention, R stands for Relevance, C stands for Confidence, and S is for Satisfaction.

- **Attention**

Perceptual Arousal- Uses interesting programs, entice them to want to be part of the process.

Inquiry Arousal- Inspire the potential member to ask questions or problem solve.

Variability- Vary the programs and activities.

- **Relevance**

Familiarity- Use language that is readily understood, don't use acronyms. They tend to become a bowl of alphabet soup that outsiders do not understand. Relate to their experience and personal setting.

Goal Orientation- Define goals and objectives or have the potential member define what they would like to see happen.

Motive matching- Provide programs or activities that match the potential member's interests.

- **Confidence**

Expect success- think positively

Challenge Setting- make sure new members achieve success by setting goals and requirements within their level.

Attribution molding- provide positive feedback

- **Satisfaction**

Natural consequences- use the member's abilities

Positive consequences- make sure the members are recognized through praise, rewards, etc.

Equity- be consistent, set standards

Let's take a closer look at who might be motivated to become a member of our organization.

Retired people- according to the AARP "research has proven that regular volunteering prolongs life expectancy and improves a person's physical and psychological well-being." Many of these people have been busy all their lives and are not ready to sit down and do nothing. Involvement with an organization that is focused on improving family and community may very well be just what they are looking for. Watch the newspapers for announcements of people's retirements, then contact them either by mail or in person.

Newcomers- people new to a community are often looking for a way to connect. Most communities have some type of "welcome wagon" or welcome packets for acquainting newcomers with the community. Ask to place your flyer and information about your organization in the packet. Better yet, get the list and personally contact these people with a friendly note or a quick phone call.

Neighbors- how many of your neighbors know what FCE stands for or even that you are an FCE member? Start a neighborhood club. Maybe it is a club that meets the needs of the people of the neighborhood such as a babysitting exchange (you sit for me one afternoon a week and I will sit for you the same amount of time another day.) start a Wednesday morning coffee club. Become involved in an issue within the neighborhood and use Family Community Leadership (FCL) training to help solve community problems.

Family- sometimes the hardest people are the easiest people to convince. It's very easy to tell our family all the things that bug us about our organization, so this is where positive thinking comes in. Let your family members know how important your work is within the organization. Make your involvement so interesting they will want to be part of it.

Single Parents- many times single parent's feels as if they don't fit in anywhere. Reach out to these people. A young woman struggling to make ends meet may welcome a program on "How to stretch a pound of hamburger."

Young People- I don't believe anyone would argue with the statement "youth are our future." Indeed, they are a gold mine of potential volunteers. The important thing to remember is that they are extremely busy. So, what does that tell us? We must have programs and activities that are appealing and worth their time. Below are some resources where young people can be found.

- 4-H members- it's only natural that 4-H members would be part of our organization. After all, many of us have and continue to support the 4-H program. Many of the programs fit together. Encourage the 4-H members you are mentoring to become members of FCE. One food project could entice them to become members.
- Schools/Colleges, Family science, nutrition, woodworking, health classes, etc.- the list is endless. Encourage your own club to become involved in what the young people in your community are doing. Offer them your knowledge and expertise in completing a science project or teach them how to knit.

Now that we've done some exploring, let's talk about how to accomplish this task.

1. Invite people from your neighborhood, church, civic association, etc., to meetings, programs, awards ceremonies.
2. Secure their names, addresses, and phone numbers and FOLLOW UP.
3. Develop a membership brochure with basic information. KEEP IT UPDATED.
4. Create a bookmark to advertise FCE and distribute at the meetings or special events.
5. Use the local newspaper, radio station or TV station to advertise programs that are open to the public. Be sure to include a phone number for questions.

After the initial contact

1. Hold open meetings in a non-threatening, public location.
2. Explain the organization, its goals and accomplishments. Accentuate the POSITIVE. Be prepared to answer questions.
3. Introduce yourself, other members and the newcomers. Smile and greet them by name. Include their names in the meeting. Personal contact is important!
4. Provide them with a contact person and telephone numbers so they can call with questions.
5. Include the newcomers in the discussion or activities.
6. Invite guests to return.
7. Be sure to say "Thank You"
8. Encourage individuals who support FCE's goals to become at large members if they cannot attend meetings.
9. Serve refreshments and schedule time to socialize.

Use the following acronym to help you remember how to market the organization.

M- Make it a point to let your friends, relatives, co-workers, acquaintances know how much you enjoy your work as an FCE member.

A- Always wear your FCE pin. It generates conversation.

R- Remember “A better world begins with me.”

K- Keep a positive attitude.

E- Energize your fellow members.

T- Take time to tell people.

Leader Lesson and Learning Activities

Interest Approach: “Sweet’N Low: Perspectives and Purpose.”

Divide into groups of three to four people. Give each group a Sweet’N Low packet and pose the question, “What is this?” and “What is its purpose?” Ask each group to discuss this among themselves.

After a couple of minutes, ask each group to give some of their answers. There will be some creative answers other than “a sugar substitute.” Point out to the group that we all have different perspectives, experiences and different ways of viewing the same issue problem, or dilemma. These differing perspectives may result in hindering motivation, increasing frustration or even contributing to conflict within a group.

This happens within FCE, as well. Sometimes differing perspective about why, who and how to invite potential new members to join FCE prevent positive recruitment efforts. Today’s lesson will help clarify the importance of recruiting members, discuss methods for recruiting and help build strategy for beginning an effective recruitment campaign.

- **Learning Activity 2:**

Ask FCE members to take a few minutes write on their note card the reason they joined FCE. After a couple of minutes divide the group into pairs and ask them to share with their partner their reasons for joining a club. Then ask a few partners to share their reason with the whole group. Write answers on flip chart (optional).

- **Discuss** how their answers related to the following reasons why people join FCE:

- Someone asked them.
- They care deeply about the issues FCE addresses.
- They have personal experience of the effects of FCE programs and want to be involved.
- They are motivated by their view of the world.
- They seek the external recognition and internal good feeling that may come with being an FCE member.

- They feel a need to pay back society for help or for opportunities that were extended to them.
 - They have untapped skills that they can use by being a member or volunteering with FCE.
 - They want to learn new things offered through FCE educational programs.
 - It is fun for them.
 - They enjoy the social situation and value the contacts with others members.
 - It makes them feel needed and useful.
- **Discuss** ways to identify potential new members. (Optional –Write on Flip Chart)
 - Identify different sectors or social structures in the community or county.
 - Identify and list potential members.
- **Learning Activity 3:**
 - Divide into small groups of three to four and ask members to:
 - List all the various sectors of their community –churches, schools, community organizations, etc. List on flip chart paper or 8 x 11 paper.
 - List potential new members in each sector, at least three potential new members.
 - List individuals in each sector who may help identify new members.
 - Compile list of all the sectors identified, potential members, and referral sources on a flip chart. Eliminate duplications.
- **Discuss** how to contact potential new members. (Optional –Write on Flip Chart)
 - Face to Face
 - Telephone Calls
 - Letters to Individuals or Community Organizations
 - Newspaper or Radio
- **Review** the Membership Recruitment Action Plan.
 - Action Step(s): What will happen?
 - Person(s) Responsible: Who will do what?
 - Target and Completion Dates: Timing for each action step
 - Resources: What resources are needed and what resources are available?
 - Collaborators: Who else can help?
 - Completion: What will the completed action step look like when completed?
- **Learning Activity 4: Developing a Recruitment Action Plan:**
 - At this point in the lesson, FCE members will have identified key social structures (sectors) in the community, created a list of potential new members, and a list of individuals who may help in identifying new members.
 - The next step is to put this information to work for the club by developing an action plan.
 - An action plan summarizes all the steps needed to conduct a successful recruitment campaign.

- Ask club members to identify each action step to be taken, which may include making personal contacts (be specific as possible by including the name of the person to be contacted), making phone calls, writing a letter, mailing letters, following up on original contact, etc.
- Then determine who is responsible for each action step.
- Decide on a reasonable target date to complete the timeline.
- Identify resources. If letters will be mailed then logical resources will include computer, printer, paper, envelopes, and postage.
- Include the names of any individuals or organizations that may assist with the action step.
- Finally, how will you know what this action step will look like when completed? If the action step is to make a personal contact to Jane Smith, then the completed action step will be Jane Smith will have received a personal invitation with a follow up to attend Anywhere FCE Club.

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