

# Five Tricks to Successful Recruiting

To conduct successful chapter programs, you must have enough members to participate and to share the workload. Recruiting is a top priority for almost any type of club. But how do you attract new members?

## 1. Set a Goal

Before you jump into a recruitment campaign, spend some time with your current members assessing where you are now and where you would like to be. Set some membership goals for the year. Think about the programs you plan to sponsor. How many members will you need to work on and attend these activities? Depending on the size of your school and your chapter's objectives, you might set a goal of 10, 20, or even 50 members.

## 2. Define Your Target Market

If you have taken a marketing class, recruiting gives you the opportunity to use what you have learned. Begin by defining your "target market". Who are your potential members? Are they seniors or freshmen, graduates or undergraduates? It is important to know who your "market" is, so you can determine the best way to appeal to those people.

## 3. Remember "WIIFM"

Once you have defined your market, you should do some brainstorming on why those people might want to join your group. Remember the old sales adage: "People are all tuned to the same radio station, WIIFM-What's In It For Me?" When we decide to join a club we do so because we believe we will get some benefit out of it. The benefit might be getting a job when we graduate, gaining experience to help us in our future career, or simply social interaction and fun. To reach new members, you must demonstrate to them the benefits they will get (what's in it for them) when they join. Emphasize these benefits when you advertise or promote the group.

## 4. Make it Easy for People to Join

Posting club flyers and advertising upcoming meetings are terrific ways to get the word out about your chapter but responding to a flyer takes effort; students must call someone, leave a message, or come to a meeting where they may not know anyone. Remember that people are busy and tend to procrastinate. The easier you can make it to contact the club and to join, the more members you will get.

In addition to posting announcements, try handing out flyers in person. You can introduce yourself and answer any questions on the spot. You can even have a supply of applications and brochures available for people interested in joining. Many chapters set up tables at career fairs, freshmen orientations, or student activities booths. These are all excellent ways to publicize your club and to make personal contact with potential members. If you post flyers with a contact name and number,

be sure there is an answering machine available, and be sure the calls are responded to promptly.

## **5. Gain faculty support**

Many of the most successful chapters have cultivated strong faculty support. If professors believe your club is worthwhile, their endorsement may help you gain a lot of members. Invite key faculty members to club events so they can see first-hand the educational value of your activities.

Set up appointments and meet with professors to explain your group and its purpose, and to ask for their help in "getting the word out." Your advisor may be able to assist you in educating faculty members about your group.

Once they have a positive view of your chapter, many professors will announce club meetings in their classes or advising sessions and encourage students to attend. Others will allow club members a few minutes to come into their classes and make brief presentations promoting the club. This is a terrific way to reach potential members!

To make presentations, prepare a brief talk about the benefits of membership, contact the professor and schedule time to visit their classes. Go in teams of two and take membership applications and brochures (if necessary) to distribute to interested students. Be prepared to answer any questions and to explain what you personally have gained from your membership. Making presentations to classes will not only bring in new members, but will also give you valuable practice in public speaking and persuasion, both essential business skills.

### **The bottom line:**

No matter how many new members you attract, they won't stay unless your group is offering them something of value. Remember the line from the Kevin Costner movie *Field of Dreams*: "Build it and they will come." Work on building a strong, active group with exciting programs and the members will follow!