



Recruitment Tips

Recruiting and retaining members is a key component of building and sustaining a successful group. Every event and meeting is a recruitment opportunity, so stay focused on making recruitment a priority throughout the year. In any situation where a recruitment opportunity is involved (including working with individuals or groups and even meetings with Members of Congress), it is useful to keep in mind the 4 Cs of Recruitment.

The 4 Cs of Recruitment

Connection: Establish a personal connection with the individual before you launch into your presentation or “ask.” Try to hone in on something you share in common.

Context: Offer some background information on the issue and why the individual should care. Share a bit about how you came to be involved in the issue.

Commitment: Be direct when you ask for what you want (attend an event, sponsor a piece of legislation, recruit 5 friends to sign postcards, etc.). Let them know why their help is particularly important. Ask if you can count on them to do what you’ve asked.

Catapult: Establish what you’ve agreed upon and the appropriate next steps moving forward. End on a positive note!

The Law of Halves

When planning an event, it is good to think backwards with the law of halves. Here is how it works: about one half of all the people who agree to come to your event will actually show up. And about half of those people you personally ask to attend an event will say yes (we’re talking about actual human contact, not phone messages or blast emails). If you’re trying to reach people by phone, you can expect about half of the people to answer. So if you want 25 people to attend an event, you need 50 people to say yes. You’ll need to speak with 100 people to get 50 people to say yes. And you will probably need to make 200 calls to reach 100 people.

General tips:

- Always be prepared with a sign-up sheet at an event or meeting, and follow up with interested individuals within a week.

- Give everyone a job. A good leader knows how to delegate. Find out what people are good at, and put them to work in a way that uses their skills. Is someone in your group good at public speaking and willing to make a presentation to other groups? Does someone have web skills? Is someone else highly organized and willing to keep track of your budget? Is someone artistic and willing to make a banner or flyers? Don't try to do everything yourself.
- Whenever a new individual shows up to one of your meetings or events, go out of your way to help them feel included and welcomed. Figure out a way for them to be involved—this will give them a reason to show up a second time.
- When you're getting started with recruitment, start small with your inner circle of friends and other groups that share a natural alignment with yours.
- Stick to a simple recruitment message (everyone should know that your group is working on abolishing slavery and securing justice for the poor, for example), but also consider how you might vary your message slightly when speaking to particular groups—for example, if another student group is interested in global HIV/AIDS, emphasize the work that IJM does on protecting AIDS widows in Africa from property-grabbing.
- Think Ahead. If you are going to need 20 volunteers to pull off a big event during the spring, start recruiting and getting people involved during the fall.
- Consider “wholesale” versus “retail” recruitment.

Wholesale recruitment casts a wide net and gets your message out to a lot of people at the same time. Strategies for wholesale recruitment might include:

- Offering a brief presentation in class, church, or for other groups and passing around an interest sheet.
- Hanging up eye-catching posters or flyers around campus or church that include information on how to get involved.
- Blast emails.
- Phone banking. This could be as simple as having everyone in your group taking out their cell phone in a meeting and calling 10 people they know to ask them to attend a meeting or an event.

Retail recruitment is the process by which you move interested individuals from the sign-up sheet to become active members of your chapter. This kind of recruitment is more time-consuming. Strategies for retail recruitment might include:

- One-on-one meetings. This is the most effective way to make someone a more engaged member of your group. Take the time to share your own story and listen attentively to their story. Ask questions! After you've established a personal connection, you can describe your chapter's plans for the year, various opportunities for participation, and how he/she might like to be involved.
- Gathering signatures on postcards. This is good opportunities to engage with people one-on-one.
- Phone calls.