



LEADERSHIP TIPS

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT: BASIC STEPS

WHY IS MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT IMPORTANT?

- Builds chapter resources – funds, person-power, and organizational health.
- Develops skills – recruitment is a leadership/business skill. It's something that happens throughout life such as jobs, volunteer work, chapter recruitment, etc.
- Builds your network intentionally; and
- Improves morale and group dynamics.

LACK OF FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT

For busy professional and student chapter leaders, sometimes membership recruitment isn't a priority. You might be concerned about local chapter member engagement, volunteer leadership, or professional development offerings. You might put your volunteer work at the bottom of your to-do list because family and work are your priorities. The headquarters staff has discovered several reasons why chapters don't focus on recruitment:

- Never sold anything before, which adds to a lack of confidence.
- The leaders haven't prioritized it by appointing a membership chairman.
- Leaders haven't put specific recruitment activities/events on the calendar for recruitment or used existing events to recruit.
- Haven't set goals for increasing membership.
- Not informed on what the chapter/national offers. Even though some people may be members for many years, they haven't thought about the top three or four reasons why someone who isn't a member yet should join.

The most common reason why members don't plan for recruitment is due to the attitude of "It's not my responsibility."

BASIC STEPS

To get started, the chapter officers should take leadership and make recruitment a priority. They need to talk about events, activities, goals, and the budget impact of increased membership. SPJ cannot rely on the strategy of "cross your fingers, and hope for the best." Recruitment must be intentional, planned, and managed by a responsible individual who will keep this on the top of everyone's priority list.

1. Define the benefits of membership.
 - Why are you a member?
 - What have you gained?
 - What services do you take advantage of?
 - What resources do you use?
2. Generate a list of potential members.
 - Co-workers – invite entire newsrooms to your chapter event.
 - Colleagues in other professional societies.
 - Pro members could create a list of friends and potential members who are freelancers.

3. Set recruitment goals and set a calendar of events.
 - Determine your membership goal for the year. Set a specific number or a percentage increase (at minimum 15-30%).
 - Use every chapter event as an opportunity to extend membership into SPJ. If nonmembers are interested enough to join a networking or educational event, they will probably be interested in joining the chapter to have more of those opportunities.
 - If a pro chapter is located near a college campus, be sure to connect with them to co-sponsor an event, mentor seniors, or hold resume review sessions. Build that relationship so that when students graduate, they know to join the local pro chapter.
4. Hold the events – look at the variety you’re offering.
 - Do you have a good mix of professional meetings?
 - Do you have good speakers?
 - How many networking events do you have?
 - How many mentoring activities do you have on the calendar?
5. Offer membership!
 - Be sure to close the deal and ask people to join. They now have new colleagues/friends in the chapter, be sure to walk them through the national database and membership sign-up process.
 - If they are not ready to join at that moment, be sure to follow up at a later time to invite them again.