



THE THREE RECRUITMENT SECRETS

You can't recruit who you don't know. This deceptively simple principle is often the biggest reason membership groups struggle to grow. Until your members have shaken someone's hand, they don't have a chance to recruit them. And there are probably countless people whose hands you've never shaken. Many organizations don't have a recruitment problem, they have a friendship problem. The first secret of growing your membership is to remember that you can't recruit who you don't know.

People don't join organizations. People join people. Too many organizations try to convince "the public" that their organization is really great and people should want to join. In other words, they shout about themselves at strangers. Let me be frank, people don't care about your organization until you care about them. Stop talking about yourself. Think about your marketing, advertising, exhibiting, brochures, informational meetings, recruitment conversations, etc. These should all be about deepening a meaningful relationship with your potential members*, not talking about your organization. People don't join organizations, people join people. Want proof? At an upcoming meeting, ask your current members to do this: "On the count of three, name the one person responsible for you becoming a member of this organization -- either person who recruited you, or the person who is the reason you stayed. Ready? 1, 2, 3!" Listen as they all say a name out loud at once. People join people. A great recruitment system requires putting your best members in a position to become "that one person" to as many potential new members as possible.

You scare people. Be more normal. The third secret is a little tongue in cheek, but nonetheless important. Are there ways that members of your organization "scare" people? Often cause-based group members share such tight fellowship, or such a deep passion for their organization's mission, that they forget that outsiders don't understand their insider experience. Sometimes it's jargon or outfits or inside jokes. Other times it's just an in-your-face intensity that spooks people away. Perhaps your organization (like many) has a bad habit of meeting someone new and immediately saying, "DO YOU WANT TO JOIN OUR GROUP?!" Relationships and commitment take time. The currency of recruitment is TRUST, and trust takes time. Smart recruitment isn't instant, it's intentional and patient.

