

RECRUITMENT

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” – Emerson

Do you have more projects than group members to complete them? Are you a new RSO trying to attract members? If you are in need of some fresh perspectives and talents that new group members can offer, take a look at these guidelines to improve your recruiting skills:

- What do you need? Before actively recruiting new members, identify the interests and talents your organization currently needs. Do you need someone to keep your finances in order? An artist to create posters and fliers? A more diverse membership to get a wider variety of ideas? In most cases, your best bet is to identify specifically what types of members you need rather than simply looking for “warm bodies.
- Where are they hiding? Once you know what type of people you need, you can narrow down the most likely places to find them. Someone enrolled in the accounting program may be a likely candidate for your treasurer. Check out student art displays and write down the names of the artist whose work catches your eye. Attend activities in different colleges and sponsored by groups different from yours to meet others with viewpoints and ideas not currently found in your group.
- Entice them. Generic letters may be time-saving, but often are considered “junk mail.” Send your prospective members personalized letters welcoming them to your organization. Be sure to include a description of your group’s purpose and the benefits of being a member. Invite them to a specific meeting and let them know someone will be contacting them to discuss their prospective membership further.
- Wow – they really want me! This is how you want your prospective members to feel. Make a phone call or meet them for coffee – something personal to feel like they know someone in the organization. This will increase the likelihood of them attending a meeting. Plus, as we all know, it is harder to say “no” in person than it is to simply throw away a form letter.
- Don’t stop – you’re on a roll! Once they have agreed to come to a meeting, do not leave it at that. Personally welcome them at the meeting and introduce them to others. Make them feel welcome, appreciated and excited about the organization. The first meeting they attend is critical when they are forming their opinions and deciding whether to join your group. For this reason, it is probably not a good idea for their first meeting to be your annual budget meeting that is known to be stressful, highly involved and six hours long!

There may be times when you just need more people, maybe to help with one particular event. In those situations where you feel the personalized method will not be feasible, try some of these ideas:

- Have each current member bring a friend to the next meeting.
- Ask resident advisors to promote your organization or event at floor activities, or see if you can attend and deliver your message in person.

- Send out an informational email to a select group of people letting them know about your group and what they can do for it.
- Present your organization at various events.
- Make brief pamphlets or information sheets to place around campus and have at events such as Quad Day, special activities and so on.
- Run an ad in the Daily Illini promoting your organization or event.
- Talk up your group with friends, classmates, housemates and everyone else you see!

Reference: Taylor, M.A. (1991). Organizational R&R. Western Illinois University.

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