Recruitment Tips

Tip #1 - Don’t be “other centered.”

If you are finding it difficult to recruit and retain members to your organization, ask why? What is it about the organization that makes it unappealing? We have a tendency to look externally for the reasons, i.e., “Everyone is too busy,” or “He/she needs to spend more time on their studies.” Which may be true, however, if you find these reasons used often, I would challenge you to take a look INTERNALLY as well.

Remember, students joined motivated organizations. What makes up a motivated organization? Motivated organizations know what they want; they have goals, a vision, and an action plan. When is the last time you evaluated your organization in the following areas to better understand where you are strong and where more attention needs to be directed?

- A sense of purpose
- Internal communication
- Growth and development opportunities
- Team building – cohesive membership
- Member participation
- Recognition

Tip #2 – Get organized and stay organized

Since most students want to join motivated organizations, they will not for the most part stick with organizations that are in disarray, where the leaders seem disorganized, or where the members are unsure of the plan. Make sure everyone involved in your organization is aware of and committed to the recruitment process, is prepared to answer questions, and feels comfortable talking about the organization to prospective members. It is the entire organization’s responsibility to recruit new members; work as a team to accomplish your membership and recruitment goals.

Tip #3 – Recruitment is an on-going process.

It isn’t something that you only do at the beginning of the semester. If your organization gets involved in Homecoming, that is a recruitment and image development opportunity; if you co-sponsor or collaborate on a program with another group or participate in a community service opportunity with other non-members that is a recruitment and image development opportunity. Use those opportunities to educate people about your organization. All members should be prepared to answer the question, “Tell me about your club, and what do you do?” Can your current members do that and is the message consistent?”

Just like companies, work to make your organization’s name a household word. Remember also, students many times are members of more than one group so the outreach you participate in may have positive recruitment affects. If you are an academic organization keep in mind, people change their majors. Don’t miss an opportunity to “sell” your organization.
Tip #4 – Make sure your group is worth the time to join.

If I’m a new member is there something I can do that can give me a sense of accomplishment? Is the only way to actually be “active” in your organization is to be an officer? A common complaint I hear from younger members is besides going to meetings and putting up fliers there is nothing for general members to do unless you decide to stick with the organization and become an officer. Does that sound like fun to you? Empower your members, give them responsibility and opportunity to practice their leadership skills. This not only will increase their confidence level but will also make them more experienced officers in the future.

Tip #5 – Create a positive and welcoming environment

Know your members names; know your members needs; personal contact is the key – email is great and it’s easy, but if you really want to keep your members and should that you value them – you must work toward more personal contact. Does your exec board know people’s names? If you are saying there are just too many members then it is even more important to have personal contact. Student will want to feel important and that they are appreciated. By knowing your members, it should that you care and that this person matters to you regardless of the importance of their job.

Structure your meetings so everyone feels comfortable. When discussing issues or brainstorming allow for individual reflection and group discussion in order to accommodate the different processing styles of introverts and extroverts. Be aware of, respect, and understand cultural differences students may be accustomed to and incorporate them into your meetings. If the age of your members varies greatly, keep in mind that their needs will be very different and discuss how your organization will work to meet those needs. Lastly, create an environment where members are secure with sharing their opinion even when it differs from the leadership or the majority opinion. Disagreements and conflicts, if handled in a professional and respectful way, make organizations stronger. Strive to have a very diverse membership base. Difference perspectives, experiences, and life styles will make the organization stronger as long as everyone is working towards the same vision and working toward accomplishing the same goals.

Tip #6 – Recruitment is not one person’s job

Although one person may need to coordinate the efforts, EVERYONE should be responsible for maintaining and sustaining membership. Your recruitment campaign should include specific techniques and tasks to be accomplished, a timeline, and an indication of who will be responsible for completing each task.