



Three Tips for Successful Membership Recruiting

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Many of us remember being personally involved with an organization that became very successful. I had such an experience with the ARMA Mt. Diablo chapter when it was launched in 1996 with 20 founding members and went on to triple its membership in five years.

There was no dominant leader on the chapter board and all members worked cooperatively. I looked forward to each meeting with my buddies. The board and chapter members became successful by sharing roles and responsibilities and building a camaraderie that lingered for years.

Here are ways to beef up your membership rosters based on my experiences.

Tip One

The most essential step in building membership is to build a clubhouse-style environment. Everyone wants to belong to a successful, friendly club that has continuing perks.

The Internet and social media have expanded our abilities to find information that can be utilized to advance our careers, but at chapter meetings we have an opportunity to learn from each other and promote expanded professional relationships. This is more difficult to get done by e-mail, LinkedIn, etc.

To help build a conducive environment, try conducting a chapter meeting in which attendees talk about their jobs and their challenges. Also, broker programs that have activities geared to people working in specific types of organizations. And don't get boxed into having a certain number of meetings on specific days or months. The membership may be better served with one or two general interest meetings and several that are devoted to specific interest groups. Be attentive to your members' needs and desires.

Tip Two

Continually update lists of prospective and current members. Here are places to look for new members:

- ARMA International members (099) in your area
- Friends and associates of current members
- Vendors and consultants
- Public sector employees (they're easy to identify by checking their websites)
- Members of other professional organizations, such as AIIM, ALA, SLA, and more
- People who attend your events



Chapter Connection

Tip Three

Execute a marketing plan that has a running schedule of who, when, and how to interact with prospects. Offer incentives to meet face to face, such as discounts or actual prizes.

Take tips from the on-going presidential primary campaigns. The candidates and their teams are calling voters, going door to door, and building alliances at rallies. These techniques can be adapted to recruit new members.

Focus primarily on phone calls and face-to-face meetings. We all get buried with impersonal e-mail solicitations. Cold phone calls are a better alternative to e-mail, which works the best after you've met someone or spoken with them.

Make sure your chapter website lists meetings and events on the first page. Everything else is useful but not necessarily compelling for prospects. Attending a meeting is an investment of time for organizers and attendees, so you need to make it worthwhile.