

SUCCESSFUL CLUB MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGNS

METHODS FOR RECRUITING KIWANIS MEMBERS

Steak and Beans: Anyone who recruits a new member at the end of a membership campaign receives a specific payoff at a designated evening meeting. Every recruiter has a steak dinner (or entre of their choice), while everyone else gets beans for the meal. In reality, the other members get the normal meal, but the recruiter and new member are treated to a steak dinner. The club sponsors the meals.

Gift Cards: Every member who recruits a new member receives a \$25 gift card. Members collect various gift cards and they are placed in a pool. Recruiters then select which one he/she wants. The presentation of cards takes place at a meeting so everyone sees the receipt of the gift card, which hopefully will motivate others to join the fun and do the same.

Special Membership Categories: Clubs can adopt membership categories that help attract new members and retain current members. Club Boards can approve these categories at discounted rates, while ensuring they cover the Kiwanis International and SW District dues and fees. A number of clubs in the SW District have used one or more of the following special membership categories:

- Senior
- Scholarship (for those with limited resources)
- Family
- Youth (previous member of a Sponsored Youth Program)

Poker: The recruiter of a new member gets to draw one card from a deck of cards. At the end of the Kiwanis year, whomever has the best poker hand out of their five best cards receives a \$100 gift card, second best a \$50 card, and the third best hand receives a \$35 gift card. When the cards are handed out, they are recorded, tracked, and posted at each meeting, so attention is brought to it and members stay engaged and aware of the competition. The payoff can come at the installation meeting of next year's officers. This method creates some enthusiasm and interest whenever a new member is signed into the club, and anticipation builds over that card will be drawn.

Desserts: Anytime a new member is signed into the club, at their first evening meeting they are treated to a dessert along with the sponsoring member. A big deal can be made about it being served to them, which will provide emphasis on bringing in a new member.

Service Event: Instead of inviting a prospective member to a regular meeting, ask them to volunteer at one of the club's community service events. If they show interest, then invite them to a regular club meeting.

600 Pound Gorilla: A member's name is drawn at each meeting, and if they have not either brought a new member to the club during the Kiwanis year, or a prospective member, they have to take the 600 pound stuffed gorilla home with them and bring it back each meeting until they at least bring a prospective new member as a guest. While more of a retribution type of program, it can be enjoyable depending on how it is done.

Membership Recruitment Meeting with Cutting Edge Program: The club designates an upcoming meeting where a very noted guest speaker is scheduled (e.g., Congressman/woman, head football or basketball coach, Mayor, City Council member, County Board member, County Administrator, TV anchor, etc.). Members would invite a prospective member to the special occasion.

Wear Something Kiwanis: A shirt, lapel pin, or hat often attract the attention of someone you know or come in contact with during your day. When they ask “What is Kiwanis?”, you have the opportunity to explain what we do and see if they are interested in community service for youth.

Networking: When Kiwanis was founded, one of the purposes was to help businesses connect to others who like to donate their time to the community. Recruiting members who have a business can be mutually beneficial for them and club members. One way to accomplish this outreach is to form small groups and go to selected malls or business parks, and ask to speak with the owner or president. You can leave a club brochure, card, and web site address for those who might be interested.

Check Book Inventory: Open your check book and make a list of people and businesses you have made payments to over the last year. Reach out to these contacts (e.g., dentist, medical doctor, plumber, owner of landscape maintenance firm, insurance agent, etc.) and ask them to go to lunch with you. Let them know up front you will be asking them to consider joining your Kiwanis club. Most of these contacts will say “YES”, because they have a business relationship with you that they value.

Social and Family Opportunities: One of the most successful techniques for recruiting members is to ask someone you know in your family, or through your activities outside Kiwanis (bowling, tennis, bicycling, racket ball, gym, golfing, etc.), to a club social. You may need to reach out to them informally over a period of months, and when they respond favorably, offer to pick them up and take them with you to the club event.

Key Club Parent Social: The idea is to invite Key Clubbers and their parents to a meeting just for them, and provide pizza and a presentation on what the Key Club has done, and perhaps involve Key Club members as speakers. A Kiwanis member (or selected members) would close the Key Club parents on the need to support the club and join the efforts in helping local Service Leadership Partners (K-Kids, Builders Club, Key Club, CKI Club, and Aktion Club), and particularly the Key Club.

Referrals from SW District: We periodically receive inquiries about membership in specific clubs. People who are interested can go to the Kiwanis International website and select clubs of interest. Kiwanis International refers these inquiries to the Executive Director or Formula Chair of the SW District. They in turn forward the information to the Lt. Governor or President of the club(s). It is important to reach out multiple times to ensure the person has the information needed to come to a club meeting, and has background on the club’s activities. Usually, a short one or two page write up on the club is helpful to have for this purpose, and can be sent to their email address. A follow up call is important if they provide a telephone number. This is perhaps one of the best opportunities to recruit a new member, since they already have inquired about your club. A club member is designated to take the initiative and make the first contact. They also follow up with multiple contacts to ensure the individual feel welcome and considers joining the club.

Chamber of Commerce: If you want to expand the number of businesses members in your club, the club can join the Chamber of Commerce. Members receive access to the membership list and contact information. Outreach can include a short email message and/or personal call to invite individual chamber members to a Kiwanis meeting or event. Additionally, Chambers often hold networking sessions in the evening or over

breakfast, and this allows for networking and the opportunity to talk about what Kiwanis does for the community.

Table at Community or Sponsored Youth Event: One way to meet possible members is to set up a table at a community or sponsored youth event. Members of the club staff the table and have brochures and flyers about upcoming events. They talk with those stopping at the table and explain what Kiwanis does for the community. Those voicing interest can be invited to an upcoming event or meeting. It may pay to partner with one of your sponsored youth organizations and have them at the table so they can share their perspective. An example of a sponsored youth event is the Key Club at Marana High School. They have a welcome back to school dinner for students and parents. Parents might be interested in joining the group that helps their kids with leadership skills and community service. Club members might help serve the dinner and/or staff a recruitment table.

Referral to the Best Club: The objective is to recruit members who are interested and stay in Kiwanis, so remember, your club may not be the best one for a new member. If you have someone you know and they are interested in athletics, and there is a club in your Division that emphasizes athletic events, let them know this is the case. Another example is you may have a young adult who might be a better member in a club with a profile of young members. It is recommended that you attend a meeting with them at the other club or forward contact information to the President of the club. The favor of membership referral likely will be returned to your club in the future. Both clubs will prosper by having members who are a “better fit”, and will stay in a club more in keeping with their interests.

Source: Composite of past Lt. Governor and President-Elect of Kiwanis International techniques for club growth.