

SEA SCOUTING MEMBERSHIP

TIPS ON RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS FOR YOUR SHIP

1. Program is, perhaps, the most important element in your recruitment of new members. Make sure your Ship's Annual calendar includes lots of exciting adventure activities, community service, vocational explorations, and nautical training opportunities.
2. Increase the visibility of your Ship in your community.
 - Newspaper news releases (Election of Officers, Advancement recognition, Activities of the Ship).
 - Posters in prominent locations in the community (Library, Schools, Grocery Stores, Retail Stores, Community Centers).
 - Flyers about your Ship and its program (Deliver them door to door in your community).
 - Information table at a local mall or in front of a grocery or large retail store.
 - **Have Sea Scouts in Uniform
 - **Make "brag" boards (picture boards) or photo albums of the Ship's activities.
 - **Have some hands on items available (demonstrate/teach knots, splicing, etc.)
 - **Have Flyers with information about your Ship available.
 - Participate in community events for exposure (Adopt-a-Highway, local parades, and other community events such as Bowie Fest, Montpelier Fest).
 - Get your program on the community cable Television programs.
 - Participate in Scout EXPOs and Camporees.
3. At least once a year compile a list of eighth and ninth graders in your community that could be "Prospective Members" and plan a "FIRSTNIGHTER".
 - Obtain a listing of eighth and ninth graders' names, addresses, and telephone numbers from the Career Interest Survey conducted by your local Council in your area. **DO NOT LIMIT YOURSELF TO THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PUT DOWN SAILING, BOATING, SWIMMING, ETC. AS THEIR LEISURE HOBBIES. SOME OF THE BEST SEA SCOUTS WE HAVE HAD HAVE LISTED HORSEBACK RIDING, BIKING, AND DRAMA AS THEIR LEISURE INTERESTS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
 - Go through Junior High/Middle School (and the telephone directory) of those schools that didn't participate in the career interest surveys and compile a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers (Yes, you are right, it isn't easy matching the names in the Yearbooks to the families in the telephone book).
 - Get a list of eighth and ninth graders (names, addresses, telephone numbers) from your sponsoring institution's membership (families) to add to your Prospective Member List. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE SPONSORING INSTITUTION FAMILIES INVOLVED IN YOUR PROGRAM!!!!!!**
 - Compile a list of 8th and ninth graders in churches your current members attend, and names, addresses, and telephone numbers of friends and neighbors who can be added to your prospective member list.
 - Decide on a date, time, and location for a "Firstnighter" (Recruitment Meeting). Make arrangements to use the hall, room or facility.

- Prepare a personalized letter to be sent to each person on your prospective member list. In addition to the date, time, and location be sure to include some of your Ship's exciting activities planned for the year ahead and even some of the Super Activities your Ship has done in the past. Personalize it by noting a personal touch in long hand, for example, "Dear Sam", "looking forward to meeting you and sharing with you our exciting and fun-filled program", "hope you can make it", etc.
- Contact Cadet and Senior Girl Scout and Campfire Girls groups in the area and invite them to attend as a group.
- Prepare a top-quality, well-planned agenda for your "Firstnighter." It should focus on the opportunities and activities offered by Sea Scouting and should heavily involve the youth members of the Ship. Have a slide presentation of some of the Ship's exciting activities, get the prospective members involved in some "hands-on" activities such as tying knots, splicing, throwing the heaving line, etc.
- Arrange for permission to use a realty firm or business office with multiple phones to call those prospective members to whom you sent "Firstnighter" invitations. The calls should be made the Sunday afternoon or evening before the "Firstnighter." This is to remind them of the meeting and to tell them personally how much you are looking forward to meeting them. The mailing and the phone call reminder should ensure between a 7-12 percent attendance at your "Firstnighter." (In other words, if you sent out 200 letters, and made 200 phone calls you should have 14 to 24 prospective members attend your "Firstnighter.")
- Address, stamp, stuff, seal, and mail the invitation to the prospective members for the "Firstnighter" (The invitations should be mailed 7-9 days before the "Firstnighter.")
- Arrange for refreshments (drink, cookies, cake, etc.) for after the "Firstnighter."
- Have your Ship members arrive the night of the "Firstnighter" a few minutes early to set up the hall/room. They should be in uniform and some should be assigned as greeters to meet and welcome the prospective members at the door. Be sure you have a sign-in sheet to record the name, address, and telephone number of each prospective member in attendance. Ensure that each Prospective member gets Sea Scouting literature and a Sea Scouting Registration Form.
- During the following week, follow-up by phone with all the prospective members who attended the "Firstnighter" but did not join that night. This phone call could be the critical link in getting the prospective member to come back and join.

3. Recruit new members year-round.

- Bring a friend to a special Ship meeting or activity (Movie night, boat day trip, etc.)
- Designate one meeting a month to bring prospective members.
- Word-of-Mouth is the best recruiter.

4. Be friendly and attentive to young people visiting the Ship meetings. If they don't feel welcome, they certainly won't join.

5. If you are short in membership, invite members from another Ship to come and help you at your "Firstnighter."

6. Place an ad in local yacht club newsletters and Marina Newsletters.

7. Plan and execute a "Super Activity" every year and a "Special Super Activity" at least every two to three years as an important "signal event" for recruitment and membership retention.

8. Most important of all is to have an exciting and adventurous Ship program. After all, it is the program that the young people are interested in.