

RECRUITING IDEAS

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO OFFER SOME SUGGESTIONS TO POST COMMANDERS IN REGARD TO RECRUITING MEMBERS. I DO NOT MIND SHARING MY IDEAS THAT MADE MY RECRUITING CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFUL. MANY DO NOT CARE TO SHARE THEIR SUCCESS BECAUSE THEY THINK OTHERS MAY DO BETTER THAN THEY DID. I SAY POOH ON THAT LINE OF THINKING, IF YOU BRING IN MEMBERS TO HELP THE AMERICAN LEGION GROW AND PROSPER, THEN THAT'S MY REWARD. WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO DO AFTER I EXPLAIN MY VIEWS ON RECRUITING IS ENTIRELY UP TO YOU, IF YOU LIKE IT USE IT, OR ADAPT IT. I'M NOT CLAIMING TO BE AN EXPERT, BUT THESE IDEAS WORKED FOR ME. ANY ONE CAN ACHIEVE SIMILAR RESULTS WITH THESE PROVEN TECHNIQUES THAT WILL HOPEFULLY MOTIVATE YOU TO REACH YOUR GOALS, AND IN TURN STRENGTHEN YOUR POST'S MEMBERSHIP. YOU JUST HAVE TO WANT TO DO IT & MAKE IT HAPPEN!

THESE IDEAS HELPED US ATTAIN 212% MEMBERSHIP, OUR POST GOAL WAS 71 MEMBER'S; WE REACHED 155 MEMBER'S IN MID MAY. I ACTUALLY HAVE 11 APPLICATIONS AFTER THAT DATE THAT I'M HOLDING FOR 2013, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO THEM TO HAVE TO RENEW AGAIN SO SOON. THESE WOULD HAVE GIVEN US 220%. OUR POST IS TOP RECRUITER IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI, WITH THE DEPARTMENT BRONZE, GOLD & SILVER RECRUITING AWARD, WINNER OF THE GOLDEN BRIGADE AWARD WITH 54 NEW MEMBERS, AND AS OF THIS WRITING POSSIBLY TOP RECRUITER IN THE NATION. I SAY THIS NOT TO BE BOASTFUL, BUT TO SHOW YOU THAT WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DEFINE IN DETAIL WORKED FOR ME! HAVE I GOT YOUR INTEREST YET?

THINK OF RECRUITING AS **PUBLIC RELATIONS**. YOU WILL BE DOING **P.R.** TO EVERYONE YOU TALK TO WHETHER FACE TO FACE, OR BY PHONE. YOU'RE OFFERING THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN A VETERANS ORGANIZATION THAT HELPS VETERANS NATION WIDE, TO INCLUDE THEM. YOU'RE ALSO ASKING THEM TO SPEND MONEY IN YEARLY DUES. JUST LIKE ANY PURCHASE YOU MUST SHOW THEM THE VALUE OF JOINING.

HERE ARE MY EASY TO REMEMBER SUGGESTIONS BROKEN DOWN IN **P's & R's** AS IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS**.

P's

PLAN

SELECT A COMMITTEE AND SHARE THE WORK LOAD. ONCE YOU HAVE A PLAN OF ACTION MAKE IT HAPPEN. APPROACH THE TASK IN AN ORDERLY WAY, AND MAKE SURE EACH VOLUNTEER KNOWS THEIR PARTICULAR ROLE. MULTI TASK WHEN POSSIBLE, WE WERE TRANSFERRING POST 1000's FROM OUR RECRUITING BOOTH.

OUTSIDE RECRUITING:

SET UP A TABLE AT A WALMART, GROCERY STORE, OR ANY HIGH TRAFFIC AREA. YOU OF COURSE MUST RECEIVE THEIR PERMISSION AND BE PUT ON THE CALENDAR. SATURDAY'S ARE A GOOD CHOICE, AS YOUR GOING TO GET YOUNGER VETERANS THAT MOST LIKELY WORK MONDAY THRU FRIDAY. A SIX-FOOT TABLE THAT FOLDS WORKED BEST FOR US. TRIM YOUR TABLE EDGES WITH SOMETHING PATRIOTIC TO CATCH PEOPLE'S EYE. HAVE PLENTY OF APPLICATIONS AND CLIP BOARDS AVAILABLE. YOU FILL OUT THE APPLICATION

AND HAVE THEM SIGN. TELL THEM IT WILL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE. PEOPLE SHOPPING GENERALLY WANT TO GET ON WITH WHAT THEY'RE DOING ESPECIALLY IN HOT WEATHER. HAVE PLENTY OF BROCHURES DISPLAYED (THEY ARE READILY AVAILABLE (AND FREE) AT THE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AT THE DEPARTMENT ROOM). HAVE THEM SECURED WITH RUBBER BANDS TO KEEP THEM FROM BLOWING OFF THE TABLE ON WINDY DAYS. ADVERTISE IN YOUR LOCAL PAPER THAT YOU ARE HAVING A RECRUITING DRIVE AND OFFER A CHANCE TO WIN A FEW FREE MEMBERSHIPS IN A DRAWING AT THE END OF YOUR CAMPAIGN. HAVE A ROLL OF TICKETS THEY CAN PUT THEIR NAME & PHONE NUMBER ON, AND DROP IT IN A JAR. MANY NON-VETERANS SAW OUR JAR AND WANTED TO SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION FOR A VETERANS ORGANIZATION BY CONTRIBUTING. WE ACTUALLY USED THAT MONEY AS FREE MEMBERSHIPS, WITH POST NOT HAVING TO CONTRIBUTE MONEY TO SUPPORT US. ALL VETERANS WHETHER THEY SIGNED UP OR NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THEIR NAME IN FOR A \$50.00 WALMART GIFT CARD.

CONSIDER INCORPORATING A PUBLIC SERVICE IN YOUR ADVERTISEMENT TO SHOW OTHERS THAT WE SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY. HAVE A BOX AVAILABLE TO COLLECT UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS FOR RETIREMENT. THE MORE CONTACT YOU HAVE WITH INDIVIDUALS THE ODDS OF RECRUITING INCREASE.

PURPOSE:

YOUR PURPOSE IS TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS, TRANSFER POST 1000's TO YOUR POST, AND RENEW YOUR PRESENT MEMBERS

PASSION:

WHEN DOING OUTSIDE RECRUITING IN HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS, MOST VETERAN'S WILL GIVE YOU A PASSING GLANCE AND CONTINUE ON THEIR WAY. IF YOU WANT RESULTS I'LL GUARANTEE YOU THAT YOU'LL NEVER GET IT BY SITTING IDLELY AND WAIT FOR THEM TO COME TO YOU. BE PASSIONATE AND AGGRESSIVE, "ARE YOU A VETERAN? DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE? I HAVE SOMETHING OF REAL INTEREST THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR DAY!! ONCE THEY APPROACH YOU, THEN IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO SIGN UP. TELL THEM WHAT THE POST DOES FOR THEIR COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATION. I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO TELL YOU WHAT THAT IS, IF I DO THEN YOU'RE NOT READY. REMEMBER ENTHUSIAM IS CONTAGIOUS, IF YOU'RE JUST GOING THRU AN MONOTINOUS SPEEL THEY ARE NOT GOING TO CARE!

PHONE CALLS:

HAVING PHONE NUMBERS IS VERY IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING YOUR RENEWALS PROMPTLY. MAYBE THEY NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED TO RENEW! MANY OLDER MEMBERS THAT CAN'T ATTEND MEETINGS OR BE INVOLVED IN OPERATION OF YOUR POST NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT THEY ARE STILL IMPORTANT, AS WE NEED STRENGTH IN NUMBERS TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE OUR PROGRAMS, LOCALLY & NATIONALLY. WHEN RENEWALS TAPER OFF HAVE A WAY THAT YOU CAN CALL THEM AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO MAIL THEIR DUES.

POST 1000's:

DEPARTMENT SENDS A LIST OF POST 1000's ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSFER TO POSTS YEARLY. IF YOU'RE NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THESE YOU'RE MISSING THE BOAT. YOU CAN ALSO GO ON MYLEGION.ORG, LOG IN AND REVIEW ALL POST 1000's. GO TO MYLEGION.ORG, GO TO POSTS [Click Here](#), GO TO TOOLS, FIND MEMBERS IN MY AREA, [Accept](#), ENTER THE SEARCH RADIUS IN MILES, THIS WILL SHOW MEMBERS WITHIN THAT RANGE, & CURRENT DUES LAST YEAR PAID.

DUES CURRENT

THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH DUES PAID TO DATE ARE OBVIOUSLY THE EASIEST AND CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO YOUR POST WITH THEIR PERMISSION. THEIR SIGNATURE IS NOT NECESSARY. YOU MUST IN THE SPACE PROVIDED FOR THEIR SIGNATURE WRITE "AS PER MEMBER REQUEST"

DUES LAPSED

THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH DUES IN ARREARS CAN ALSO BE TRANSFERRED TO YOUR POST BY HAVING THEM PAY FOR THE CURRENT YEAR. IF THEY ARE ONE-YEAR IN ARREARS, IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A RENEWAL. IF THEY ARE OVER TWO YEARS IN ARREARS THEY WOULD BE CONSIDERED A NEW MEMBER. IF THEY ARE OVER TWO YEARS IN ARREARS AND WOULD BE FINANCIALLY DIFFICULT TO HAVE THEM KEEP THEIR CONTINUOUS YEARS THEY SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THEY WILL LOSE THEIR CONTINUOUS YEARS. ONCE THEY ARE CURRENT AND YOU HAVE THEIR DUES, TRANSFER CAN BE INITIATED, AGAIN... YOU NEED THEIR PERMISSION. THEIR SIGNATURE IS NOT NECESSARY. YOU MUST IN THE SPACE PROVIDED FOR THEIR SIGNATURE WRITE "AS PER MEMBER REQUEST"

WHAT DO I SAY?

"HI (NAME) MY NAME IS (NAME) I'M THE POST (CMRD / ADJ / MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN / ETC) THE REASON I'M CALLING IS YOU AT ONE TIME ANSWERED A DIRECT MAILING FROM THE AMERICAN LEGION ASKING YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER, WHICH YOU RESPONDED TO. YOUR HOME POST IN JEFFERSON CITY HAS ASKED ME TO PLACE YOU IN A POST MORE LOCAL TO YOU, SO WE CAN BETTER SERVE YOUR NEEDS. WE HAVE A SERVICE OFFICER THAT CAN ASSIST YOU WITH ANY VA CLAIMS, AND A HONOR GUARD THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES CAN ASSIST YOUR SPOUSE OR FAMILY IN PROVIDING A MILITARY FUNERAL, SOMETHING THAT ALL VETERANS DESERVE. BEING INVOLVED IN A LOCAL POST HAS MANY ADVANTAGES; YOUR DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IS YOUR CHOICE. NATURALLY WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU ATTEND MEETINGS, WHICH ARE (THE 1ST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7:00 PM). IF YOUR HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD NOT ALLOW YOU TO PARTICIPATE YOU CAN STILL MAIL YOUR DUES IN THE SAME MANNER YOU HAVE BEEN. THE ONLY THING THAT WILL CHANGE WILL BE WHERE YOU'RE BE MAILING YOUR DUES. YOU WILL STILL RECEIVE YOUR DUES REMINDER EVERY YEAR AS YOU HAVE IN THE PAST."

PERSONAL CALLS:

HAVING A COMPLETE PHYSICAL ADDRESS IS VERY IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING YOUR RENEWALS PROMPTLY. MAILING ADDRESSES ARE OFTEN INCOMPLETE ESPECIALLY WITH RURAL ROUTES. ONE ROUTE MAY ENCOMPASS MANY STREETS, ROADS, AND HIGHWAYS, GIVING YOU NO IDEA WHERE THEIR HOME IS? MANY RECEIVE MAIL THROUGH A PO BOX. DO YOU HAVE A RECORD OF WHERE THEY ACTUALLY LIVE? HAVE

PHONE CALLS BEEN UN-ANSWERED? MANY MEAN TO RETURN YOUR CALL, BUT GET BUSY. MAYBE THEY NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED TO RENEW! MANY OLDER MEMBERS THAT CAN'T ATTEND MEETINGS OR BE INVOLVED IN OPERATION OF YOUR POST NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT THEY ARE STILL IMPORTANT, AS WE NEED STRENGTH IN NUMBERS TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE OUR PROGRAMS, LOCALLY & NATIONALLY. WHEN RENEWALS RECEIVED TAPER OFF, HAVE A WAY THAT YOU CAN CALL ON THEM AND PICK UP THEIR DUES.

PROFIT

HOW YOU PROFIT FROM YOUR EFFORTS IS HIGHLY DEPENDANT ON HOW WELL YOU PERFORMED IN CARRYING THROUGH WITH THESE AND OTHER IDEAS. WHAT WORKED BEST FOR YOU? WHAT BOMBED? WHY? RE-EVALUATE WHAT YOU DID AND ASK YOURSELF, HOW COULD I HAVE DONE BETTER? WHEN YOU PROFIT, EVERYBODY PROFITS; DISTRICT, DEPARTMENT, AND NATIONAL, A WIN/WIN SITUATION!

R's

RECRUITING:

YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW, MANY VETERANS WHEN ASKED WHY THEY WEREN'T INVOLVED IN A VETERANS ORGANIZATION, REPLIED "NOBODY EVER ASKED ME." BEAR IN MIND THAT WE AREN'T LIKE MANY FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE INCLUSIVE, AND MUST BE RECOMMENDED BY ANOTHER MEMBER. IF YOU THEY A VETERAN WITHIN OUR ELIGIBILITY DATES THEY CAN BELONG.

TELL VETERANS WHAT WE DO TO SUPPORT THEIR COMMUNITY, AND ASK THEM TO BE A PART OF OUR GREAT VETERANS ORGANIZATION. WE INFORMED THEM THAT WE: GAVE YEARLY SCHOOL SCHLORSHIPS, WE SUPPORTED OUR VA HOSPITAL, GAVE FOOD VOUCHERS TO NEEDY VETERANS, THAT OUR SERVICE OFFICER ASSISTS VETERANS WITH VA CLAIMS, THAT WE SUPPORTED VETERANS HOMES, VETERANS CEMETERIES, (TO NAME JUST A FEW). THINKING BACK ON OUR RECRUITING CAMPAIGN WE SHOULD HAVE HAD A LIST POSTED FOR ALL TO SEE & ALSO A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE THAT STATED ALL OF OUR SUPPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY.

WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR PERCEPTION OF WHAT PEOPLE ASSOCIATE OUR AMERICAN LEGION POSTS WITH. IF YOU WERE TO ASK MOST PEOPLE, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR LOCAL LEGION POSTS? YOU WOULD MOST LIKELY HEAR, "THEY HAVE BINGO ON TUESDAY NIGHTS, FISH FRIES ON FRIDAY NIGHTS, THEY HAVE A BAR & PULL TABS, AND THEY HAVE A MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE." THIS IS NOT HOW I WANT OUR POST TO BE PERCEIVED! DO YOU? DON'T BE AFRAID TO TELL THEM WHAT WE DO!

REACHING YOUR GOALS:

SET A REALISTIC DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY, OR YEARLY GOAL THAT IS OBTAINABLE. UNREALISTIC GOALS THAT ARE SO HIGH THAT THEY CANNOT BE MET WILL BE DISCOURAGING. IF YOU FALL SHORT OF YOUR GOAL, RE-GROUP AND DECIDE WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO TWEAK IT AND MAKE IT MORE SUCCESSFUL.

KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR PROGRESS; KNOW WHERE YOU STAND IN RELATION TO OTHER POSTS. THE EFFORT YOU PUT INTO RECRUITING IS IN DIRECT CORRELATION TO THE RESULTS YOU ACHIEVE.

YOU CAN DETERMINE YOUR OWN PERCENTAGE:
UNDER 100% DIVIDE NUMBER OF MEMBERS INTO GOAL
OVER 100% DIVIDE GOAL BY NUMBER OF MEMBERS

REMEMBER WHY YOU'RE RECRUITING:

YOU WANT VETERANS TO JOIN A VETERANS ORGANIZATION THAT YOU ARE REPRESENTING. YOUR APPEARANCE IS IMPORTANT, LOOK YOUR BEST! DRESS APPROPRIATELY, YOUR LEGION GARRISON CAP, AND LEGION POLO SHIRT MAKES YOU LOOK LIKE YOU CARE. YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOU ASKING THEM TO BE.

RESPECT:

WHETHER TALKING TO OTHERS AT YOUR RECRUITING BOOTH, BY PHONE, OR PERSONAL CALLS ALWAYS BE PLEASANT. THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE THAT ARE NOT NICE TO DEAL WITH. DON'T BE ONE OF THEM WHEN YOU'RE TREATED BADLY. TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT. TREAT PEOPLE THE WAY YOU'D LIKE TO BE TREATED.

RENEWALS:

HOST AN EARLY BIRD BREAKFAST AS AN INCENTIVE FOR THOSE THAT SEND IN THEIR DUES IMMEDIATELY. PICK A CUT OFF DATE, AND REWARD ALL THOSE THAT HAVE RESPONDED BY THAT DATE. HAVE YOUR CMDR. / MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN BE THE ONES TO DO THE COOKING & SERVING.

RETENTION:

RETENTION IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS RECRUITING. EVER MEMBER YOU RETAIN IS ONE LESS MEMBER YOU'LL NEED TO REACH YOUR GOAL. ONCE YOU RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER MENTORING THEM IS VERY IMPORTANT. INTRODUCE THEM TO OTHER MEMBERS, AND MAKE THEM FEEL A PART OF YOUR POST. HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND PROCEEDINGS AT YOUR POST MEETINGS, AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO BE INVOLVED.

BEST TO YOU IN YOUR RECRUITING EFFORTS

***PHILIP BAKER
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