

TIPS ON RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS FOR YOUR SHIP

1. Increase the visibility of your Ship in your community.

- Newspaper news releases (Election of Ship Petty Officers, Advancement recognition, activities, etc.)
- 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 and display 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 community cable Television programs.
- Participate in Scout EXPOs and Camporees.

2. 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 in your area schools by your local council. DO NOT LIMIT YOURSELF TO THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PUT DOWN SAILING, BOATING, SWIMMING, ETC. AS THEIR LEISURE HOBBIES. SOME OF THE BEST SEA EXPLORERS WE HAVE HAD HAVE LISTED HORSEBACK RIDING, BIKING, AND DRAMMA AS THEIR LEISURE INTERESTS!!
- Go through school yearbooks (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 Yearbook to the families in the telephone book).
- Get a list of eighth and ninth graders (name, address, telephone number) 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!!!!
- Get a list of eighth 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 "Superactivities" 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.

- 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 your “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 a 7-12 percent attendance at your “Firstnighter.” In other words, if you sent out 200 letters, and make 200 follow-up phone calls, you should have 14-24 Prospective Members attend your “Firstnighter.”
- Address, stamp, stuff, seal, and mail the invitation to the Prospective Member 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 and their parents at the door. Be sure you have a sign-in sheet to record the name, address, and telephone number of each Prospective Member who attends. Ensure that each Prospective Member gets Sea Scouting literature and an Venture 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 to join your Ship.

3. Recruit new members year-around.

- Bring a friend to a special Ship meeting or activity (Movie night, boat day trip, etc.)
- Designate one meeting a month when members are encouraged to bring a Prospective Member.
- 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 your Ship.

5. 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.

6. If you are short in membership numbers, invite members from another Ship to come help you at your “Firstnighter.”