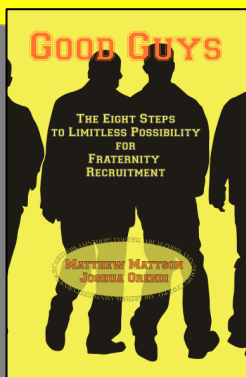




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FRATERNITY  
RECRUITMENT**

## MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT MADE EASY

By  
Matthew G. Mattson, M.S.  
Joshua A. Orendi

Are you a member of an organization? If so, it is probably safe to say that you didn't join that organization because of some poster you walked past, letter you received, event you attended, or advertisement you saw. The truth is, though, that those are the very things that most organizations believe are the best tools for recruiting new members or volunteers.

No, you probably didn't join because of any of those *things*, but, here's a question: Can you name *the person* who got you to join?

Ninety-nine percent of organizational members (no matter the organization) can point to the one or two people who are responsible for getting them to join. There is a simple reason for that: People don't join organizations. People join people. Then, they work toward a mutual purpose that bonds them with the organization.

**“People don't join organizations.  
People join people.”**

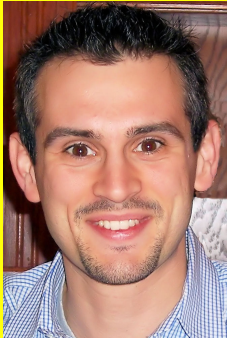
Whatever kind of organization or group you're a part of, that organization has two core needs. It needs a clear *purpose* to rally around, and it needs *people* to perpetuate that purpose. The problem is that most members are only focused on their organization's *purpose*. One of the biggest reasons most organizations struggle to find members, volunteers, or even employees is that while they *are* so incredibly passionate and informed about their *purpose*, they *are not* as passionate, or prepared to fulfill their other core need: *people*.

Some examples of this might include a community volunteer group that helps bring meals to homeless people every Thursday night. While they're incredibly compassionate individuals, and though they have an efficient, effective process for managing the resources it takes to help thousands of people in need, they can't seem to get enough members to make the impact that they know is possible. Or consider a college sorority. Even a leadership-oriented, values-centered group of collegiate women that does thousands of hours of community service and fosters the deepest sisterhood often has a hard time finding and convincing other women to join its efforts.

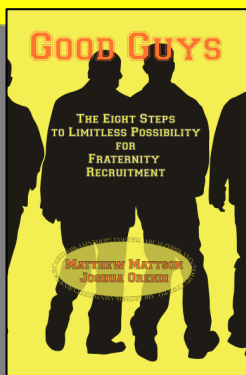
Why is this? What is holding these groups back from being able to share that experience they value so much with the number of people they deserve?



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### **S.P.A.M.**

The answer, believe it or not, can be found in a tin can. Not just any can though. Go to your local grocer and search the aisles for a distinct rectangular can with a blue background and bright yellow lettering. That's right, S.P.A.M.

If we gathered 100 random people off the street and asked them their impression of a can of the meat product known as S.P.A.M., what do you think many of their responses would be? Many people have a bad taste in their mouth when it comes to this pork product. When shown a can of S.P.A.M., they will respond with words like *yuck, gross, slimy, fake, gooey, cheap, boring* or *blah*. But here's the funny part. Ask that same group of people how many have actually tried S.P.A.M., and you'll find out that only about 20% or so have ever cracked open a can.

There are two main lessons we can learn about recruitment just by thinking about that canned meat product. First, it is important to know that many people are judging your organization, just like they judge a can of S.P.A.M., before they ever try it. So that makes it even

### **Four Competencies of Recruitment**

**S**kills  
**P**roduct knowledge  
**A**udience understanding  
**M**otivation

more important to understand that people aren't going to join your group because of a poster, T-shirt, advertisement or mass E-mail – they need to meet you or someone like you that can give them a personal connection and experience in the group. The second thing we

can learn from S.P.A.M. is that there are Four Competencies of Recruitment that you can learn, practice and master to help grow the quantity of quality members in your organization. These competencies form the acronym S.P.A.M.

### **Motivation**

While the S.P.A.M. acronym might seem to suggest that you first need to develop your recruitment Skills (because the "s" comes first), the truth is that an organization looking to improve its recruitment results should start by motivating its members.

Most groups have a strong, dedicated core of leaders that do 80% of the work. Unfortunately, that core group of leaders only makes up a small percentage of the organization, while the majority of members often remain unmotivated to do things like recruitment. Often, organization leaders will ask, "How do I motivate my members to recruit?" The problem is that this is the wrong question to start with. For the most part, you can't force people to do what they don't want to do. However, if you re-frame the question, you'll discover the answer for yourself. Try asking, "How do I recruit with my motivated members?" That question will get you somewhere.



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There are two keys to motivating your members to do the hard work that it will take to significantly increase your organization's recruitment results

*Motivation Key 1: Build a Dream*

Have you asked your members lately what their dream is for the organization? Does your group have a big, wild, detailed dream that it is trying to achieve? Believe it or not, if the answer is no (and it usually is), this could dramatically impact your ability to recruit members. Work with your group to develop a big dream to shoot for. Once you've identified your dream, ask yourselves what it will take to achieve that dream. Ninety-nine times out of 100 it will boil down to one need: a higher quantity of higher quality members. Once the group understands that recruitment can lead to a great big dream that they're all passionate about, motivation will be much easier.



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*Motivation Key 2: Do It Yourself*

While building a dream and tying recruitment efforts to that dream for motivation will inspire a good number of your members to join in the recruitment fun, there will still be a group of people that aren't motivated to do any recruitment work. Here's an important piece of advice: the more time you spend trying to motivate them, the less time you have to get out and meet new people to recruit into your organization. Let the lazy members be. Your time is better invested in duplicating yourself. Just go out and recruit people who will be as motivated as you are.

The greatest gift a member can give their organization is not a financial donation, special favor, or even hosting the annual banquet. The greatest gift is giving your organization another member that will contribute at your level or above. Good members become great stewards when they shift their focus from internal logistics to external service and consistently duplicate themselves with motivated members.

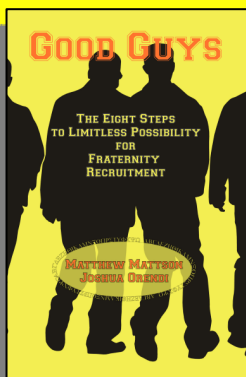
**Audience Understanding**

Now that you've got a team of motivated members ready to get to work, take a moment to consider who you are going to recruit. In order to do this, try to get an answer to these three questions:

1. How big is your potential audience?
2. Are there people you can consider to increase your potential audience?
3. What are your membership selection criteria?

Understanding the size of your potential audience is very important. Most organizations think they understand their market potential, but often they are just looking at a sliver of their potential membership pool.

Begin this process by looking at the pool of people you usually recruit from. Do they have to find you? If the answer is yes (for most of your members), then you've got a much larger audience than you're currently tapping for membership.



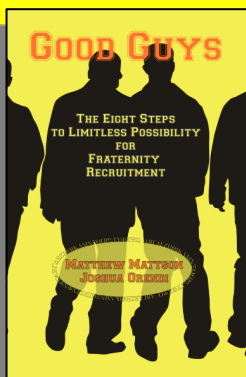
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Take this example. An organization that provides support groups, advocacy opportunities, and educational programs for people living with a mental illness recently wanted to expand the amount of people it involved. When asked, they reported that everyone that joined was recently diagnosed with a mental illness, and the only way anyone was recruited was by putting fliers in doctors' offices. When challenged on their audience potential, this group recognized that about 1 in 5 people in the U.S. have a diagnosable mental illness, and all of those people have family and friends who would be interested in being involved in this *good cause*.

When the group saw the possibilities of opening up their organization to anyone who wanted to help with this good cause, they suddenly started talking about how the organization could triple in size very quickly. They also realized that if they had more conversations with more people about their organization, their results would be dramatically impacted as well (because they'd be reaching a large population in need of their services).

This new perspective was simply due to an expansion of their Audience understanding. They saw that their potential audience was much bigger than that from which they normally recruited, and that if they re-imagined what kind of member might benefit from the organization (and be a benefit *to* the organization), their potential for growth expanded quickly.

While it is very important to understand your organization's growth potential, it is just as important to maintain the quality standards of your group by having measurable selection criteria. Does your group have specific, measurable, observable criteria which serve as the basis for membership selection? If not, is there a specific agreement or commitment that each potential member must agree to before joining? These two approaches can make all the difference in the world when it comes to your organization's quality – after all, the quality of the organization is in direct correlation with the quality of its members.

### **Product Knowledge**

Before you and your motivated team of recruitment hungry members go out into that newly expanded potential member marketplace, make sure you've all prepared the following three things. After all, if you don't know your product, how are you going to sell it to others?

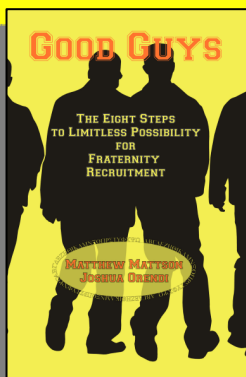
1. *Elevator Pitch*: In 30 seconds, can you answer this question with confidence and authority: "So, what is your organization all about?" It is a simple question, but people often stumble trying to find an answer or drone on about it for hours on end. Have a succinct, accurate, passionate explanation of the organization you're so proud of.
2. *Benefits Not Features*: Normally when people talk about their organization they talk about the big events, meeting spot, cool website, special awards, history, or mission statement. But these are all features of the organization. Prospective members care about how the



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organization will benefit them, not what features it has. Be prepared to share how the organization will benefit a potential member or volunteer. How will it make their life better? Some examples of benefits might include: “Our organization will help you reach your goal of meeting 100 business leaders in the community,” or, “Our group provides that family-like connection you’ve been looking for.”

3. *Quality Responses:* Inevitably, potential members for your organization are going to have some concerns about joining. Maybe they’re worried about the cost of membership, the time commitment, their family’s reaction, or any number of reasonable (and sometimes unreasonable) excuses for not becoming a new member or volunteer. You’ve heard these excuses before, and you know how often they keep potential members from joining. Fortunately, however, if you prepare and practice quality responses based on your positive experiences, you can have a lot more success. Make a list of the Top 10 Reasons People DON’T Join Your Organization. Now, after each one, say, “I know how you *feel*, I *felt* the same way, but here’s what I *found*...” and provide a quality response. Prepare all of your members with these responses.

### Skills

This is where the rubber meets the road. You are now motivated, you understand your audience, and you know how to talk about your product. Now all you have to do is go meet people and talk with them. Easier said than done.

The truth is that many people lack the basic interpersonal skills it takes to be a great recruiter. Another truth, however, is that these skills are easily learned and aren’t really all that difficult. An article is probably the least effective way to actually teach interpersonal recruitment skills, but there are a few tips which can be shared through this medium.

**“You can’t recruit who you don’t know.”**

First, it is important to understand that you can’t recruit who you don’t know. This simple fact reminds us that the skills we’re discussing here aren’t hard sales skills.

They aren’t cold-calling skills, used-car salesmanship techniques, or skills for con-artists. The skills we want to build are those that simply help us meet new people. Meeting people, knowing their name and contact information, and having a friendly discussion with them is 90% of recruiting. The more you do those simple things, the more your organization will grow.

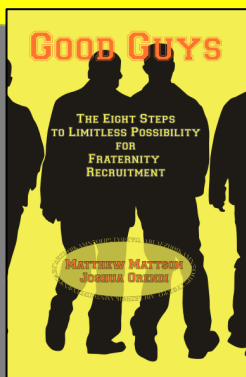
The goal of your developing recruitment skills should be to collect as many names of potential members as you can. Once you have a person’s name, and have established initial contact with them, the key is to get to know each other through normal, friendly activities (which do not necessarily need to be related to your organization – remember, people join people, not organizations). But getting



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names is the hardest part of this whole process. Watch how difficult getting a name can be.

*Scene:*

*Man walks up to stranger at book store.*

Man: "Hi, my name is Joe."

*Man reaches out right hand toward stranger.*

Stranger: "Hi, I'm Susan."

*Stranger shakes man's hand.*

There it is. That's it. Maybe it isn't all that difficult after all. By doing two simple things – reaching out his right hand and offering his name – Joe not only made physical contact with this prospective member for his organization (she is *now*), but he also got from her the most important word in her vocabulary: her name. The conversation could go anywhere from there, but here are a few suggestions.

- \* Ask about them, don't tell about you. People are interested first and foremost in themselves. If you let them talk about their favorite topic, they'll like you and you don't even have to say much (except maybe ask a few good questions).
- \* Use their name occasionally. Remember this is the most important word in their vocabulary. Plus, using their name gives you a better chance of actually remembering their name.
- \* If you get to the point in the conversation where an awkward silence takes hold, try talking about these F-words: **F**amily, **F**riends, **F**rom (where are they from?), **F**uture (what do they have planned for this weekend, next week, next year?), **F**irsts (is this their first time here?), **F**avorites and **F**un.
- \* If the conversation does drift to your organization as the topic, be prepared with the elevator pitch that you have been working on.
- \* Find out about their needs – what do they wish for? Use that information to pair the value and benefits of membership in your organization with their wants and needs.
- \* Don't be afraid to ask them to join. Do you know how many people have never joined your organization because you didn't ask them? A lot.
- \* If you'd like to make sure they will say *yes* before you ask them to join, try this question, "If we were to ask you to join our organization right now, is there any reason you'd say no?"



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- \* If they have concerns about joining, use the quality responses you've prepared.

These are just a few helpful tips, but if you just do these things you will see real results. By having good conversations with more people, the quality and quantity of members in your organization can dramatically increase.

Remember to remain focused on the basic needs of the organization: *People* and *Purpose*. Stop feeding your potential members S.P.A.M. Try a more meaty recruitment process. Start taking an active approach to recruitment, and master these Four Competencies. Your organization is worth it.



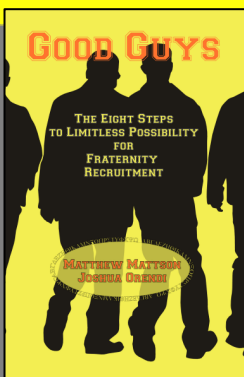
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**Phired Up Productions** is an education firm providing recruitment services to membership organizations. Our message is for customers that desire a higher quantity of higher quality individuals involved in their organization(s) – and who are interested in long-term, limitless success.

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