

Creating Strong Clubs: Expanding Recruitment Opportunities

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Recruiting to membership, as well as retention, is important to our survival as clubs and as an organization.

Looking at ways to recruit, it is important to remember that:

- We are a classified service organization with membership by invitation.
- Our members are executives and professionals, as well as others in a decision-making capacity willing to support the objects of Zonta International.
- Members need to be actively engaged in or have experience in a recognized business or profession in a decision making capacity.
- Our purpose is primarily service-advancing the status of women through service and advocacy.

When recruiting questions we need to think about are:

- Where do we find our potential members with such qualities?
- How do we go about “hooking” them as members?
- Do they meet classification requirements and
- Are they in classifications the club needs to be more diversified?

For starters we, as clubs should:

- look at the classifications of our members
- Using the Classification manual as a tool, determine what classifications would be helpful to our clubs and seek them out.

Where to find potential members:

- **Business acquaintances and contacts.** These are the most effective means of potential members. One-on-one contact is probably the best way to interest people in membership.
 - As you deal with this potential membership pool, assess their interest in service and their fit within your club culture.
 - Inviting them to meetings or participation in service projects or fundraisers is a strategy for assessing that interest.
 - Provide them with Zonta information to review and suggesting they review the websites, Club, District, and International.

- Follow up with them after they attend meetings as guests, or participate in events. This is vital to maintaining their interest. It will allow us to answer questions they might have re: Zonta and allow us to further assess their potential as members, as well as club fit.
- **Speakers.** As we have speakers at our meetings and events, consider them as potential members. Also consider speakers you hear at other meetings and events, as they too, may work as potential members.
 - Look at their topic as a potential project idea and the experience and expertise they may bring to club membership
 - Watch their interaction with club members before, during, and after their presentation.
 - In the case of speakers outside the club, observe their interactions with the audience.
 - Again, assess potential interest in service and club membership, as well as club culture fit; invite them to club meetings and /or events; provide them Zonta information; and follow up with them.
- **Newspaper articles identifying women who have received promotions or awards.** Such women may be ripe for recruitment into Zonta. They are probably already “movers and shakers” in their fields and may bring that “zest” to club membership.
 - Send them a nice congratulatory letter on behalf of the club and explain, briefly, what Zonta is, along with brief organizational information to help acquaint them with Zonta.
 - Follow-up, shortly if possible, with a phone call and try to interest them in attending a Zonta meeting or event as a guest – or- Perhaps as a speaker to talk about their success in their field.
 - Again assess their interest in service and potential club culture fit.

It is important to further the membership potential

- **Local Chamber of Commerce.**
 - Look on-line at your local Chamber of Commerce for executives, business owners and professionals.
 - Send them letters of introduction with brief organization information to acquaint them with Zonta.
 - Follow-up with phone calls, determine interest and invite them to Zonta meetings and/or events. Again, they could be recruited as speakers for starter.
 - Follow-up again after they attend or speak to determine further interest.

- **Telephone Directories.** Once you determine the classifications you want to recruit, look through yellow pages or a business telephone book for potential members in those fields.
 - Send letters of introduction from the club, with brief organizational information to acquaint them with Zonta.
 - Follow-up with phone calls to determine interest and invite them to attend meetings and events.
 - Follow –up after attendance to answer questions and maintain their interest.
- **Zonta International Referrals.** ZI periodically sends to the District people who have expressed interest in membership through the ZI Website. These referrals are reviewed by the Lt. Governor and forwarded to the appropriate local club for follow-up.
- **Information Sessions.** Holding Zonta information sessions and inviting women business owners and professionals to attend is another potential. The list of invitees can be determined through all of the above.
 - Send invitations
 - Advertise in newspapers or other type media.
 - Provide Zonta organizational information, including mission.
 - Follow-up on attendees for continued interest.

How to “hook” them as members?

- Determine what their primary interest is and, in the Zonta information provided, focus on projects or activities of Zonta that meets that interest. **DO NOT MISREPRESENT, however, or your momentum will be lost.**
- Follow-up after they participate in some way to see if their interest is being satisfied.

Cautions:

- Be sure a potential member’s interest is primarily service and not **only** networking
- Determine that they are an organizational and club fit
- Make sure the club culture works for them and the club.
- Be sure membership expectations, including financial expectations are workable for them.
- Positive assessments of potential members in these areas will help to effectively recruit and then retain members. Effective recruitment, and therefore, retention is vitally important to our clubs and takes everyone’s efforts for success.