

Easy stages guide to Recruiting New Members.

Why recruit?

1. It secures the future of the Club
2. It enables the Club to do more Programme Action activities
3. It helps to share the running of the Club
4. It brings new ideas to the Club

Preparing the Club for new members

To ensure this the Club should:

1. Organise a Club reflection event and look at its own practice and have an honest conversation about membership. If a new member joined what would they see at a meeting? Would you ask a friend to join? There is an Easy Guide around a Club reflection event available on the website.
2. Make sure that all members are happy to have new members and make a commitment to bring in new and possibly younger members - remember that they may think differently – so the culture of the Club may need to be reviewed. Is the Club prepared for that?
3. Talk about how the Club will identify women to bring in – is the Club looking for someone with specific skills?
4. Discuss and agree how the Club can understand the needs of new members.
5. Consider looking at generational marketing Easy Guide, toolkit, poster and PowerPoint presentation to help the preparation
6. Talk to members that have left – does the Club need to change as a result of that?
7. Include recruitment objectives in your Club development plan to help with the way forward. Remember to use SMART objectives that are (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Related)
8. Have membership resources ready to hand out using the new logo i.e. a business card/bookmark/leaflet

When to recruit?

Clubs should:

1. Look for new members whenever and wherever.
2. For example, it could be a taxi ride going to an event talking to men and women who may have sisters or mothers who could join"
3. Hold a Club membership drive/recruitment event linked to a UN Day
e.g. 21st September – International Day of Peace
10th December – International Day of Action
8th March – International Women's Day

Some ideas can be found on the website, look for "101 ideas to recruit members".

Think about why women become Soroptimists.

1. Hold a Club discussion about why women become Soroptimists
2. Get Club members to write their own elevator speech, there is a Easy Guide to this on the website
3. Agree with Club members what will be used with potential new members. Some ideas are:
 - Make improve the lives of women and girls, locally, nationally and internationally. (Programme Action)
 - Have a larger voice on issues affecting women and girls by being part of an international women's organisation and having a voice on the UN.
 - Have an opportunity for active service
 - Have fun, and enjoy friendship and support
 - Network, and increase knowledge whilst giving something back
 - Enjoy friendship worldwide – share Programme Action, learn about the world, and travel to meet friends
 - Growth in confidence to talk to people about what is important in life
 - Meet women with different interests who share the same values
 - Improve skills that could be transferred to the workplace

Who do we want to join us?

1. Why do you think the person you are talking to might want to join?
2. What can we offer them in our international organisation? Remember this may be different for women of different ages

Check the Easy Guides on generational marketing, there is even a poster toolkit and PowerPoint presentation for marketing Soroptimism to Baby Boomers and other generational marketing tools.

How do we gain their interest?

There are many ways that we can promote ourselves to gain the interest of women who want to become members of Soroptimist International. Plain word of mouth is probably still the best way, but Clubs should also consider and use other methods of attracting new members such as:

- Press adverts/PR in local media about the Club's activities
- Look in local papers for women of achievement
- Mention it when meeting professionals such as doctors, dentists, teachers
- "Bring a friend" event
- Programme Action events/other high profile activities
- Speaker meetings – open them to other women who might want to attend
- Club websites
- Social media sites e.g. Facebook
- Other Clubs, organisations with similar goals
- Partnership working with other organisations

What are you actually going to say to introduce these new members?

- Be truthful about what you achieve
- Explain we are unique as a women's organisation that works through service projects locally, nationally and internationally.
- Here are some examples of 'Elevator Pitches' – what you might say in 30 seconds in a lift to introduce our organisation:
 1. I belong to a local Club of like-minded women who put at its heart making a difference and improving the lives of women and girls so that they reach their full potential. It is a women's service organisation that networks locally, nationally and internationally by doing projects. We also have a voice on the UN (United Nations) to promote women's issues. We are dynamic and we enjoy ourselves. Would you be interested in coming along to a meeting? I have a leaflet here.....You can also check out our website on www.sigbi.org
 2. SI is a fabulous organisation of women from all walks of life who, as an international group have a voice on the United Nations, and transform the lives of women and girls globally – to make the world a better place – working via friendship, fun and service to others. Visit our website www.sigbi.org to find out more!
 3. A vibrant forward thinking organisation with a woman-centre focus aiming to educate to lead.. Ultimately we seek to get our voice heard to make a difference to their lives locally, nationally and internationally.
 4. Soroptimist International promotes the lives of women and girls and has been in existence since 1921. It is a Club worth joining because we constantly embark on projects that enrich the lives of women and girls and the women involved are passionately committed to the cause – Here is a leaflet for you.

If you would like to write your own elevator pitch there is an Easy Guide on the website to help you.

Getting them to a Club meeting and encourage them to become members.

There is a wealth of ideas and Easy Stage Guides on the SIGBI website. Try to use some of the ideas or alternatively look at past copies of Membership Matters for ideas.

Make joining the Club a special event.

Individual Clubs have different ways of making joining a Club special.

1. Some Clubs use words from the constitution as a welcome speech
2. Other Clubs use the presentation of the badge and the new members pack as a way of marking a new member joining
3. Some Clubs hold a social event and introduce the new member informally
4. Other Clubs have the mentor introduce the new member

Ongoing support for your new member.

Data from Federation Office shows that one third of new members leave after their first year of membership as the Club does not meet their expectations, but it is interesting that the average length of service of members is 12 years.

New members will also receive a phone call from the Federation Councillor to offer support and advice – this has proved very useful. The information given is in confidence but a general summary to support Clubs will be included in Membership Matters.

1. Appoint a mentor for the new member. Sometimes new members have 2 mentors or supporters a newer member and a more experienced member
2. Ensure all Club members continue to support each new member
3. Lead by example and model the behaviour you would expect to see from others
4. Remember we are all different and procedures that work for one person might not work for another.
5. Manage expectations, communicate so you don't have dissatisfaction and conflict
6. Involve everyone in the process of membership

Why do new members leave?

The things members most enjoyed were Programme Action, with opportunities for hands on work that was local and International, and friendship.

We are aware that members are leaving because of the behaviour and culture of Clubs, comments include:

1. Club members bullying members and general unkindness.
2. Bad meetings – not focused and boring, decisions not made by executive so information often repeated.
3. Bureaucracy – too much communication forwarded to Club members that was not discussed by the executive.
4. Resistant to change and did not listen to new ideas.
5. Time and family commitments.

Some comments:

Poorly conducted meetings –

'Attendance became a chore, Club meetings became an extension of my working day – bickering and lack of control at the meeting'.

'I found the acoustics of the venue for business meetings extremely difficult and asked, without success, for consideration to improve matters'.

Tensions/conflict between newer and longer serving members – often concerning Club 'traditions'.

'I did feel that most of the members in the Club were much older than me. No one has small children and they were more able to put time and money into events'.

Uncaring attitude –

'I am surprised that, despite 13 years of service, including 6 years as Hon Secretary, no one has acknowledged my letter of resignation, nor attempted to discuss the matter with me'.

Expense –

'So many of the Club's meetings involved meals which I thought were expensive and which I did not want to spend on myself. Over a year, more was spent (on average) on meals than the Club raised collectively for charities'.

We put a lot of effort into getting new members but if they don't stay as members it does not help the Club so think about the running of your Club – and see if it is the type of Club new members will want to join.