

Chapter Membership Plan

Almost everyone talks about the need to plan, but how many of us actually do it? How many of us would even know what one might look like? To help start the process, here is an actual chapter membership plan (edited only slightly for use here) from a chapter which by any measure became an AFA success story.

MEMBERSHIP PLAN FOR APRIL 1, 20XX THROUGH MARCH 31, 20XX

We will continue to emphasize new members. However, since recruiting new members is becoming harder and harder, additional emphasis will be placed on retaining current membership. To do these things we plan the following:

PROGRAMS

1. Have monthly programs tailored to the needs and interests of the majority of our members.
2. Conduct Chapter business in Executive council meetings, separate and apart from chapter social functions.
3. Introduce new members, guests and Community Partners at all Chapter functions.
4. Keep brunches, dinners and other functions at the lowest cost possible.
5. Provide programs and activities that are different from those offered by competing organizations, i.e. SAR, ROA, TROA, MOWW, AL, VFW, etc.
6. Encourage members to bring guests.
7. Avoid running up the total cost of attending the functions, i.e. raffles, donations for good causes, etc.
8. Have an active Hospitality Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Conduct membership program 365 days per year.
2. Send "Welcome Aboard" letters to every new member, including automatic affiliations.
3. Stamp on newsletter, "Thanks for renewing your membership."
4. Recognize all newly affiliated members on the front page of the Chapter newsletter.
5. Get all members involved in recruiting new members.
6. Don't neglect to recruit a member's spouse.
7. Have members recruit brothers, sisters, sons, daughters and other relatives.
8. Make recruiting and retention personal. Work face-to-face. Stay away from the mail.
9. Ask people to join. Tell them what we do and why joining us will be in their best interest.
10. Have members bring guests to functions. Then recruit the guests.
11. Get a good Vice-President for Membership who will work on it on a daily basis.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

1. Know your product and what you are trying to sell.
2. Have a Vice-President for Community Partners.
3. Have the membership use the Community Partners' services. It is most important that, when using their services, they be reminded of their customers' AFA affiliations.
4. Have a "Directory of Services" in the newsletter.
5. Recognize your Community Partners at all functions.
6. Network off existing Community Partners.
7. Rework past Community Partners.

MECHANICS and NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Audit, work and take actions from monthly national reports. [This chapter once had a new President elected before it was realized that his membership had erroneously been assigned to another chapter. Ed.]
2. If there are problems, call National.
3. Send all new applications through the Chapter's central contact point to assure immediate updating of Chapter name and number.
4. Never give an application to a member or prospective member unless it includes the Chapter name and number.
5. Use "Address Correction Requested" on all bulk mailings.
6. Provide membership applications to all key Chapter people.
7. Maintain membership roster daily.

8. Contact any member you don't know when he/she fails to renew.
9. If the member is known, contact prior to the renewal date to assure (or encourage) renewal.
10. Note name of spouse on membership rosters.
11. Break down the roster for each member of the Membership Committee so that number of members being tracked is manageable — i.e. one hundred per person.

RECRUITING ACTIVE DUTY, AIR NATIONAL GUARD, RESERVE and ROTC (Senior and Junior units.)

Since we have none of these units in our area, no organized recruiting actions will be taken.

COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AVIATION COMPANIES

(Involved in manufacture, repair, sales of military weapon systems or support and maintenance of such systems, including commercial aviation)

Since we have none located in our chapter area, no organized recruiting actions will be taken.

SUMMARY

The statistical goals for the April 1 through March 31 Membership Year are as follows (based on a 4/1 strength of 370)

1. Total membership goals

✎ A 10% increase in size 370 to 407.

2. New Members

✎ 20% of our April 1 strength of 370 or 74 new members.

- ✧ This will help us replace the members we expect to lose and to grow. It will also make us competitive for membership awards.
- ✧ At least 1% of our October 1 strength of 385 each quarter to make our Chapter Performance Incentive goal.

3. Community Partners

- ✧ By 3/31/xx we should have slightly less than 120. We currently have 111 and stand 4th in the nation. Growth beyond this level is not realistic.
- ✧ The chapter goal is to hold at 100-120

4. Potential for Awards

- ✧ After several years of continual award-winning new member production and growth, this will be a year in which we plan to achieve the following:

- ✧ New Member awards — (Jack Gross Award)
- ✧ Gold Community Partner Award
- ✧ Membership ribbon at convention for making Chapter Performance Incentive goal each quarter

5. Additional Thoughts

- ✧ Develop/execute a viable communications plan in the community
- ✧ Expand chapter involvement in the community
- ✧ Expand hospitality functions and actions at chapter programs
- ✧ Design programs which attract one third of the total membership
- ✧ Find and develop hard working leaders.

* This chapter plan is adapted from one used by the Richard S. Reid AFA Chapter #106 of Arizona in 1993-1994. Clearly, they were doing something right. Thanks to plans such as this and the dedication of, among others, the late Richard S. Reid, Sr., this medium sized chapter, not located adjacent to an Air Force Base, won almost every significant AFA membership award during the early 1990's.

The chapter grew from 61 members in 1988 to over 370 in 1993 and estimated they were fast approaching the maximum strength (400 to 450) they might expect a small, unincorporated community of 18,000 to support.

The John W. Demilly Chapter offers a different, no less effective approach to a membership plan.

MEMBERSHIP

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: John Doe/ Jane Smith

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Bill Member

ANNUAL BUDGET: \$200.00

PROGRAMS AND GOALS:

1. Recruit sufficient members to;
 - As a minimum, qualify for national support payments. That will require recruiting new members equal to one percent of the membership each quarter. Based on the September 30, 1998 baseline of 263 members, that requires one new member per month or three per quarter.
2. Obtain sufficient new members — either through recruitment or transfers — to:
 - As a Minimum, replace those lost through attrition so as to stabilize the chapter membership. Based on recent experience, that is approximately five to seven members per month.
 - Preferably, increase the chapter membership by 10 percent to approximately 299 members/patrons.
3. In October to December quarter, conduct a broad based membership drive to recruit at — a minimum — the 12 new members required to satisfy AFA National's membership requirement for rebate payments. The membership drive should encompass the military, the retirees community and the civilian community.
4. Recruit approximately 10 additional Community Partners while retaining the existing memberships so as to finish the year with a minimum of 40 Community Partners.
5. Recognize the Community Partners at all chapter functions and in the newsletter. Continue to offer free business card ads in the newsletter.
6. In conjunction with the Community Relations Committee, conduct recruiting activities at meetings of local service and professional organizations.
7. Operate an AFA information and recruiting booth at local sites as opportunities present themselves.
8. Send "Welcome Aboard" letters to all new members including automatic affiliations and transfers.