

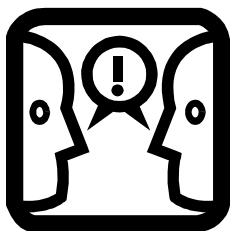
# Member Recruitment Guide #1: Fundamentals of Recruitment

Michigan District of Circle K



## Most Effective Method: Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is both the simplest and most effective means of member recruitment. Sometimes it even occurs naturally, as members discuss Circle K with their friends. But even a concerted effort to recruit through word of mouth is not time-consuming. Any member can do it, and any type of student can be reached by it equally well. Often, students will not seek out activities on campus, so members have to be proactive in seeking out students for Circle K. When recruiting for Circle K through word of mouth, be enthusiastic, and emphasize both the social and service aspects of Circle K. Invite each student to a specific project or event. This way, his familiarity with Circle K quickly proceeds past talk and into action. Also, an invitation to a specific project or event will show a student that he is wanted and needed in Circle K.



Word of mouth provides a valuable opportunity for a member to discuss Circle K in more depth than through other recruitment methods. Knowing only the logo or the name, a student may not understand what Circle K is. Through word of mouth, a member can explain Circle K and compare and contrast it to other student organizations, and can use this opportunity to discuss the elements of service that the particular student is interested in.

In fact, the personal element in word of mouth recruitment is part of what makes it so successful. A student will feel more at ease attending his first meeting if he already has an acquaintance within the club. And providing him with some basic information about

*(Continued on page 2)*

Input for this series of guides was obtained through an extensive survey conducted at International Convention 2001. The survey respondents included over 160 members from 27 out of the 30 districts, and represented clubs at all types of schools. The Michigan District extends its sincerest thanks to all who completed our survey.

The information in this series is intended to supplement the existing recruitment resources provided by Circle K International, some of which are listed on the final page of this guide. This guide contains information on recruitment methods appropriate for all school types. Please also consult the supplemental guide in this series for information on recruitment methods proven to be particularly successful for your school type.

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## Word of Mouth (continued)

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Circle K through word of mouth – before his first meeting – will facilitate easier dialogue with him about Circle K while he’s there. Additionally, direct one-on-one contact allows a member to sincerely convey the benefits of service through Circle K. The emotion of a member’s service experiences speaks more loudly than the printed words on a flyer or mailing, and the fact that the student can see how much the member cares about his work through Circle K might make him care as well. And of course, while not intrusive, word of mouth is much harder to ignore than other methods of publicity.

Members can speak about Circle K with acquaintances, friends, roommates, residence hall neighbors, classmates, co-workers, and others, simply on their own time. Or, members can plan to approach passers-by before or after meetings with a more organized effort. While any member can recruit through word of mouth, some types of members can be particularly effective at this method. For example, members who serve as residential advisors (RAs) have a special influence on younger students living in their residence halls. And members who are well-known across campus – perhaps star athletes or student government leaders – stir up interest in the organization, increasing word of mouth on campus. In fact, even faculty advisors can be effective mouthpieces for Circle K, especially if they teach large classes and can reach a lot of students.

At larger schools, the personal touch of word of mouth recruitment may be needed to differentiate Circle K from the many competing student organizations, and to make Circle K stand out through the onslaught of printed recruitment information. On the other hand, at smaller schools, word of mouth can reach a greater proportion of students, and the tighter campus community might make students might be more open to listening.

When implementing word of mouth recruitment, keep in mind that talk must be followed up with visible actions in order to make an impression on students, so it’s important that the actual activities of the club be highly publicized as well. And, while word of mouth is great for recruiting quality members, it may not be the most efficient approach if quantity is your goal.

## Least Effective Method: Webpage



Club webpages can be useful for current members, but they generally don’t do the trick in terms of member recruitment. Impersonal nature, out of date or incomplete information, poor quality, and especially inadequate promotion tend to plague club webpages. If you do choose to

use your webpage as a recruitment tool, try to address these challenges. Tackle the challenge of promotion by listing your webpage address on all posters and publications. Create stickers or small posters highlighting your webpage address that you can post near each computer in campus computing sites. And to attract potential members to your webpage, add functions that are useful to them, such as a method of automatically subscribing oneself to the club e-mail reflector.

## Recruitment Drive Timing

While the beginning of the academic year is the usual time for a club’s main membership drive, it should never be the only time for such an effort. Aim to have a major recruitment drive at the beginning of every academic term, and possibly also at other times in the year such as Circle K Week.



## Assistance From Your Sponsoring Kiwanis Club

Your sponsoring Kiwanis club is interested in the success and growth of your club, and should be willing to assist with recruitment in several ways. Kiwanians can hang posters, make chalkings, and staff information booths alongside your club’s members. Or, the Kiwanis club can provide funding for recruitment materials, food or activities for a mass meeting, or dues subsidies.

## **1 Come Play With Circle K.**

Rather than a traditional table display at an organization fair, spread a picnic blanket across the grass at your designated space. Seat members on the blanket, blowing bubbles and grabbing ankles of passers-by. Other members wander through the fair passing out happy gram handouts including good luck wishes for the new school year and information about Circle K. Continue the theme throughout the year by retaining members through hands-on, fun projects.

## **2 Twelve Days of Circle K.**

Hold a rush period including constant social and service activities for potential members. On largely Greek campuses, this method may be more familiar and appealing to students, and on any kind of campus, a high level of activity sustained over several days will help Circle K to stand out among competing student organizations.

## **3 Sweet Treats and Sour Puns.**

Distribute candy to get students' attention, and attach a witty message. Use hard candy with the messages, "Be a *lifesaver* – join Circle K!" or "You were '*mint*' for Circle K!" Or with chocolate kisses, offer to give each passer-by a *kiss*!

## **4 Bra in the Men's Room.**

Hang a poster attached to a bra in men's bathrooms on campus. This humor is certain to get the attention of students and administrators alike, so be sure to get the appropriate permissions first.

## **5 K-Campaign.**

Blitz the campus with mysterious posters and chalkings of a simplified Circle K logo, just a "K" with a circle around it. As time passes, shift to designs

which include additional items of information about Circle K, and wrap up the campaign just in advance of your mass meeting. For an additional twist, create posters by hand to look like children's artwork.

## **6 Who Cares?**

Focus your posters and chalkings around the question "who cares?", with the answer, of course, being Circle K. An element of mystery can also be incorporated in this campaign, by shifting from the question alone to designs which include additional items of information as time passes. This campaign elicits interest among those students who genuinely care about community issues.

## **7 Song Lyrics.**

Chalk catchy or popular songs lyrics, with altered words about Circle K, on campus sidewalks as a fun diversion for students on the way to class.

## **8 Riddles or Trivia Questions.**

Chalk riddles or trivia questions on campus sidewalks, and direct students to a Circle K meeting to learn the answer.

## **9 Body Outlines.**

Chalk body outlines on campus sidewalks, with the message "fill the service void" and information about Circle K.

## **10 Pencil Drop.**

Order pencils or other promotional items printed with information about Circle K, and deposit them all over the campus grounds. As this could be considered littering, be sure to get the appropriate permissions first.



# Ten Unique Recruitment Ideas

amusement park tickets  
restaurant gift certificates  
sport event tickets  
movie tickets  
campus bookstore gift certificates  
coupons or discounts  
VIP pass to Circle K events  
shirts – new  
shirts – old Circle K event shirts  
hats  
visors  
boxers  
underwear  
panties  
school team attire  
work gloves  
sunglasses  
bandanas  
friendship bracelets  
temporary tattoos  
face painting  
school sports spirit packages  
stuffed animals  
beanie animals  
squeeze stress balls  
bendy snake toys  
playing cards  
frisbees  
beachball  
mini football  
pom-pom  
yo-yo  
planner  
wall calendar with Circle K events noted on it  
binders  
folders  
notepads  
post-its  
highlighters  
pens  
pencils  
bookmarks  
mini phone book of hot spots for students  
magnets with pizza phone numbers  
clip magnets



## Sixty-Nine Promotional Items

regular magnets  
mini dry erase boards  
door hangers  
cup  
ceramic mug  
travel mug  
thermos  
plate  
bowl  
can insulator  
water bottle  
bottle opener  
keychains  
flashlight keychains  
lanyards  
bottle of water with Circle K sticker  
cookies decorated with Circle K logo  
chocolate Circle K logos  
compact disks  
floppy disks  
car window decals  
stickers  
happy grams  
warm fuzzies  
condoms

## Targeting New Students

New students are an excellent target for recruitment efforts, because their time is not yet committed to other extracurricular activities and they may be looking for a way to find a niche on campus. With some advance planning, your club can reach new students even before they come to campus. Consult the administrative offices that deal with new students to inquire about inserting information in new student orientation materials and other items that are mailed to new students before they arrive on campus, or about acquiring new students' addresses to send them your own mailing. During the first week of the term, help with new student move-in, assist with school-sponsored new student welcome activities, and publicize heavily. Early in the term, distribute quarter-sheet handouts on or under residence hall room doors and make door-to-door visits in the residence halls. Don't forget about new students entering during the winter, spring, or summer terms, and be sure to target transfer students and first-year graduate students in addition to freshmen.

## Targeting Non-Traditional Members

### **Who?**

Graduate and professional students, off-campus and commuter students, students in non-mainstream academic programs, international students, and students of demographic groups lacking in your club are examples of populations to focus on for membership expansion.

### **Directed publicity and events.**

Tailor your publicity to the specific groups you are trying to reach. Emphasize different service opportunities depending on the academic interests or personal background of the group you are targeting. Host a large one-day project in a specific service field and specially facilitate participation of students from a particular non-traditional group, such as a project with a welfare-to-work agency geared toward social work and public policy grad students.

### **Co-sponsorship of events.**

Perhaps members of greek organizations or persons belonging to a certain ethnic group, for example, are mysteriously missing from your club's membership. Enhance such groups' familiarity with Circle K by co-sponsoring an event with key special-interest organizations. In addition to enhanced goodwill, such an effort will likely result in crossover members.

### **Diversity of events.**

In order to attract a diversity of students, you need to hold a wide range of service projects, varying in terms of service field, time of the week or day, and one-time as well as long-term projects.

## Ongoing Membership Recruitment

### **One member at a time.**

Aside from the mass effort of a membership drive, most Circle K recruitment will be a matter of one person at a time. Encourage every member of your club to focus on a set of several acquaintances, hallmates, or classmates to personally invite to attend service projects and meetings with him. Everyone is a prospective member, whether he knows it or not! Getting these individuals out to a few events, even as guests, is the best step in bringing them into club membership. "Bring a Friend" should not be an occasional theme, but a way of life!

### **Return to membership drive potential-member list.**

Students who have shown a prior interest in Circle K by talking to your recruiters at a membership drive should be the object of continual attention, even after the drive has come and gone. Every couple of weeks throughout the year, return to that list and personally contact individuals, encouraging them to come to projects or meetings.

# Enhancing Your Recruitment Efforts

In addition to specific recruitment methods, these elements of Circle K attract and retain the interest of potential members. Once you determine which methods you will implement, try to incorporate these behaviors or emphases into your recruitment efforts.

## **Personal attention.**

Unbridled enthusiasm and general information are adequate to get the attention of a potential member. But once he stops to talk to you at a booth or meeting, take the time to talk one-on-one as much as possible. This allows you to expand upon aspects of Circle K that are important to the particular individual, answer his questions, and most importantly, makes him feel that someone in the club cares about his involvement.

## **Key Club connection.**

Students who were in Key Club, Builders Club, or K-Kids Club come to college equipped with a familiarity and loyalty to the Kiwanis family. Also, these students have a demonstrated commitment to service. Capitalize on this connection in recruiting members for your club. Mention Key Club or the Kiwanis family in your recruitment materials, and if possible, personally contact Key Club alumni at your school through a letter writing campaign.

## **Friends already in club.**

A student will feel more at ease attending his first meeting if he already has an acquaintance within the club. So, use your current members to the fullest in recruiting new members. To lessen the awkwardness of inviting acquaintances to a club event, hold special bring-a-friend meetings for certain types of acquaintances (bring-a-classmate meeting, bring-a-roommate meeting, etc.), and offer a fun prize or benefit for both participating members and their guests.

## **Early involvement in service.**

Involving potential members in service as early as possible will show them that Circle K is serious about service, as well as integrate them into the club. Schedule projects to start at the very beginning of the year, and have sign up sheets available at your recruitment tables. Invite potential members to specific projects.

## **Excitement.**

Students have many opportunities for service; many will be looking for an outlet where they can have fun while serving. So, the club's enthusiasm for your activities must come across in recruitment efforts. Be as excited as possible, short of appearing artificial. Enthusiastic recruiters will also help the club stand out among competing student organizations.

## **Three tenets of Circle K.**

Students are attracted by Circle K's combination of service, leadership, and fellowship opportunities. Few competing student organizations can boast such diverse benefits as Circle K. Highlight all three aspects in your publicity in order to attract the widest possible audience.

# Membership Requirements



The type of membership requirements referred to here consists of any requirements your club

chooses to implement beyond what is required for membership in Circle K International and in your district.

Examples are attendance requirements, service hour requirements, committee involvement, interclub participation, attendance at club educational seminars or orientation programs, or minimum GPA. The discussion below should assist you in determining whether to implement membership requirements, and if so, how extensive you

choose to make the requirements.



## Pro

- Ensures that members have a common base of experience and knowledge in the organization.
- Ensures that those individuals who attain membership have demonstrated a degree of commitment to the organization.
- Reinforces the idea that Circle K membership is a privilege and honor, which may enhance loyalty to the organization.
- Minimizes number of “paper members,” students who would pay dues to join solely to note it on a resume without intending to be involved.
- Likely to increase club performance level on per-member statistics.

## Con

- Flexibility as far as number of participation hours required can be an attractive characteristic for prospective members comparing Circle K to other service organizations that have minimum membership such requirements. Some students may be attracted to the fact that they can determine their own level of participation.
- Some types of requirements, for example GPA or attendance at expensive conferences, may portray Circle K as elitist or pose a deterrent to membership.
- Likely to reduce total membership.

# Retaining Inactive Members and Engaging Potential Members

## Simply ask!

Often the obstacles to a member’s participation are straightforward and easily resolved. Is the meeting time or location bad? If so, see if this is the case for a significant portion of the membership, and consider changing it. Or find an alternate way for those members to receive meeting information: post project schedules and meeting minutes online or in an accessible location, or send the information out by e-mail. Does he find the projects uninteresting? Make some changes or additions. Is he having trouble meeting membership requirements? If so, find a mutually acceptable solution to the problem, or encourage him to continue participating as a guest until he can meet the requirements for membership. Even if the obstacles can only be partially resolved, showing a member that the club is concerned and willing to accommodate may bring him a step closer to active membership.

## Follow-up and communication.

Always maintain contact with prospective members, students who expressed interest during the membership drive, and of course all active and inactive members. Maintain an e-mail list which includes not only members but prospective members and interested students, and send project schedules and meeting minutes to that list. For those who are not involved, make phone calls on a regular basis to remind them about Circle K or personally invite them to a particular event or project.



## **1 Education.**

Educate potential members about what their club, district, and international dues money is used for, especially how it supports services which directly benefit them. For more information, contact your district treasurer or counseling international trustee.

## **2 Special benefits for dues-paid members.**

Guarantee that a certain fraction of Circle K conference registration fees for each dues-paid member will be paid by the club. Or, grant each dues-paid member a certain amount of funds to spend as he chooses on conference registration fees, Circle K promotional items, or other related expenses. Subsidize these benefits with funding from your club administrative budget, your sponsoring Kiwanis club, or your school.

## **3 Penalty for paying late.**

Increase dues by a dollar each week past a certain deadline to encourage potential members to pay in a timely manner.



## **4 Payment plan.**

Allow potential members to pay dues in installments through a fixed plan.

## **5 Fundraisers to pay for dues.**

Hold special fundraising projects, in which the funds raised by each potential member offset his own dues. Or, have a "servant" program within your club, in which members or Kiwanians purchase a potential member's services for a day, and the money they pay offsets the servant's dues. With this approach, take precautions to ensure that the program is promoted and implemented in an appropriate manner.

## **6 Partial payment of dues.**

Use funds from your club administrative budget, your sponsoring Kiwanis club, or your school to pay a fraction of dues for all potential members or to pay the full dues for the first certain number of potential members. Or, match potential members with a Kiwanis buddy, and if the potential member pays a certain fraction of his own dues by certain date, ask the Kiwanian to pay the remainder. Determine exactly how this program will work in conjunction with the Kiwanis club before involving potential members or Kiwanians.

## **7 Two for one.**

Offer a "two for the price of one" special for friends who join together.

## **8 Drawings for free or subsidized dues.**

Offer partial or full dues reimbursements to random dues-paid members through a drawing. Or, late in the year, hold a drawing among dues-paid members for free or subsidized dues the next year.

## **9 Recognition for dues-paid members.**

Post a banner with the handprint of each dues-paid member, and allow new members to add their handprints when they pay dues. Give each new member a pen or other keepsake item when they pay dues, and hold a prize drawing or pizza party for dues-paid members.

## **10 Pie in the face.**

The club president gets a pie in the face if a certain number of members pay dues by a certain date. Hold a drawing among dues-paid members to determine who gets to do the honor.

# Involving Members

## **Interesting meetings.**

Try varying the format until you find something that is exciting for the audience as well as efficient. Have the meeting leader(s) stand and move around rather than sit. Have multiple people lead portions of the meeting. Do icebreakers, games, or interactive activities between meeting sections. If members don't enjoy meetings they won't come back, and without regular meeting attendance they may lose touch with the club entirely.

## **Projects.**

Frequent projects, and a variety of projects to choose from, are the best way to keep a member or prospective member involved and interested. Emphasize project participation from the start. Encourage prospective members to sign up for a project, even at their very first meeting. Induce continuing members to set project participation goals for themselves, such as a number of projects per week or hours per term.

## **Non-service activities.**

While service is the focus, leadership and fellowship are what set Circle K membership apart from simply doing service on an individual basis. Once members have a firm foundation in service project participation, encourage par-

ticipation in leadership and social events. Of course, be sure to provide adequate opportunities in this regard!

## **Activities beyond the home club.**

The multi-campus aspect of Circle K is another distinguishing factor, setting Circle K apart from single-campus organizations. Introduce members first-hand to the rewards of interacting with other clubs through interclubs and joint projects, and to the benefits provided by the division, district, and international levels of Circle K by attending conferences and conventions.

## **Leadership.**

Being personally invested in and formally committed to running some aspect of the organization – however large or small – guarantees a member's continued interest, attention, and participation. Extend opportunities for committee membership or chairmanship, involvement in project planning, and responsibility for administrative tasks to all members, even new members. Encourage members to consider club, divisional, and district offices and appointed positions. Additionally, involving members in leadership tasks early in their careers as members will ensure a solid foundation for elected club leadership in years to come.

## **Personal attention.**

Aside from fun social events, what "fellowship" really means is a relatively tight-knit group of people who know and care about each other. The club can create and reinforce this structure in many ways:

- A buddy system between continuing members and new members can formally build ties while showing new members the ropes in Circle K and giving new members – often freshmen – a friendly mentor on campus.
- Send "we miss you" cards to members or prospective members who don't make it to meetings. It reminds them that the club hasn't forgotten them and actually cares about their participation, and also gives them a gentle reminder about their commitments to Circle K.

Try a "meet and greet" program in which members are assigned to greet people coming in the door to the meeting. This provides a vehicle for interaction between members who may not know each other already, and also serves to guarantee against the awkward silence of everyone sitting in their seats waiting for the meeting to start. Mandatory mingling!

## Further Resources for Recruitment

For more details on these and other recruitment and retention ideas, consult the following printed resources. Also, your lieutenant governor and her club building team are available to assist you in tailoring these ideas for success on your campus and implementing your recruitment and retention plans.

Available to download from <http://www.circlek.org/support>:

- membership recruitment and orientation bulletins
- public relations kit
- suggestions for reactivating probationary status Circle K clubs
- how to run a successful membership roundup
- membership interest survey

Available to order from [http://www.circlek.org/support/literature\\_ordering\\_online.htm](http://www.circlek.org/support/literature_ordering_online.htm):

- member recruitment brochures (free)
- taking the lead marketing video (free)
- membership recruitment and orientation manual (\$2)
- membership development manual (\$2)

Available from the Michigan District governor's files:

- recruitment and retention summary, with techniques for:
  - implementing a membership drive
  - recruiting throughout the year
  - targeting non-traditional students
  - involving new and prospective members
  - determining membership requirements
- sample recruitment materials, such as:
  - club information sheets
  - list of membership benefits
  - letters to students
- sixteen ways to promote your CKI club
- list of items for a good retention program
- recruitment tips and do's and don'ts of recruiting members
- recruitment workshop materials
- membership program manual
- membership education and recruitment program manual
- the choice of a lifetime: comparing Circle K International and the greek system



Michigan District of Circle K  
Member Recruitment Series  
Fall 2001

The following supplemental guides providing information on recruitment methods for various school types are also available through this series. Please consult the appropriate guide for your school type.

- Member Recruitment Guide #2: Large Four-Year Residential Schools
- Member Recruitment Guide #3: Large Four-Year Suitcase Schools
- Member Recruitment Guide #4: Medium Four-Year Residential Schools
- Member Recruitment Guide #5: Medium Four-Year Suitcase Schools
- Member Recruitment Guide #6: Small Four-Year Schools
- Member Recruitment Guide #7: Four-Year Commuter Schools
- Member Recruitment Guide #8: Community Colleges and Non-Traditional Schools