

Recruitment and leadership development

If you don't focus on recruitment and leadership development now, your organization won't exist in two years. Oftentimes we get so busy with our campaigns that we forget about recruiting and getting more folks involved in the organization. Then, when the campaign and the school year are over, there is no one left; everyone has graduated or moved on to other things.

It's important to think about *why* you are recruiting. Don't recruit for the sake of recruiting! Think carefully about how many people you actually need, either to run your group effectively or to make an event you are planning successful.

There are two kinds of recruitment: mass recruitment, and one-on-one recruitment. Mass recruitment, as the name suggests, reaches out to a large audience. For example, we use mass recruitment to get folks to the first meeting, or to a rally or protest. One-on-one recruitment, as the name implies, seeks to reach the individual. In this case, we recruit folks who we think may be potential leaders, or show a particular interest in a campaign. **For both types of recruitment, it is essential that you plan ahead and use campaign events to build your organization.**

Here are some things to consider when recruiting:

Mass Recruitment:

- Use your campaign message. Connect with *why* these people would want to join your group;
- Ideally, you should engage and involve your audience. So be creative! Use crazy signs, make zany announcements, etc;
- Never forget the rule of halves. If you get 100 people to say they will come, only 50 will show up. Thus, always recruit more than you expect to come.

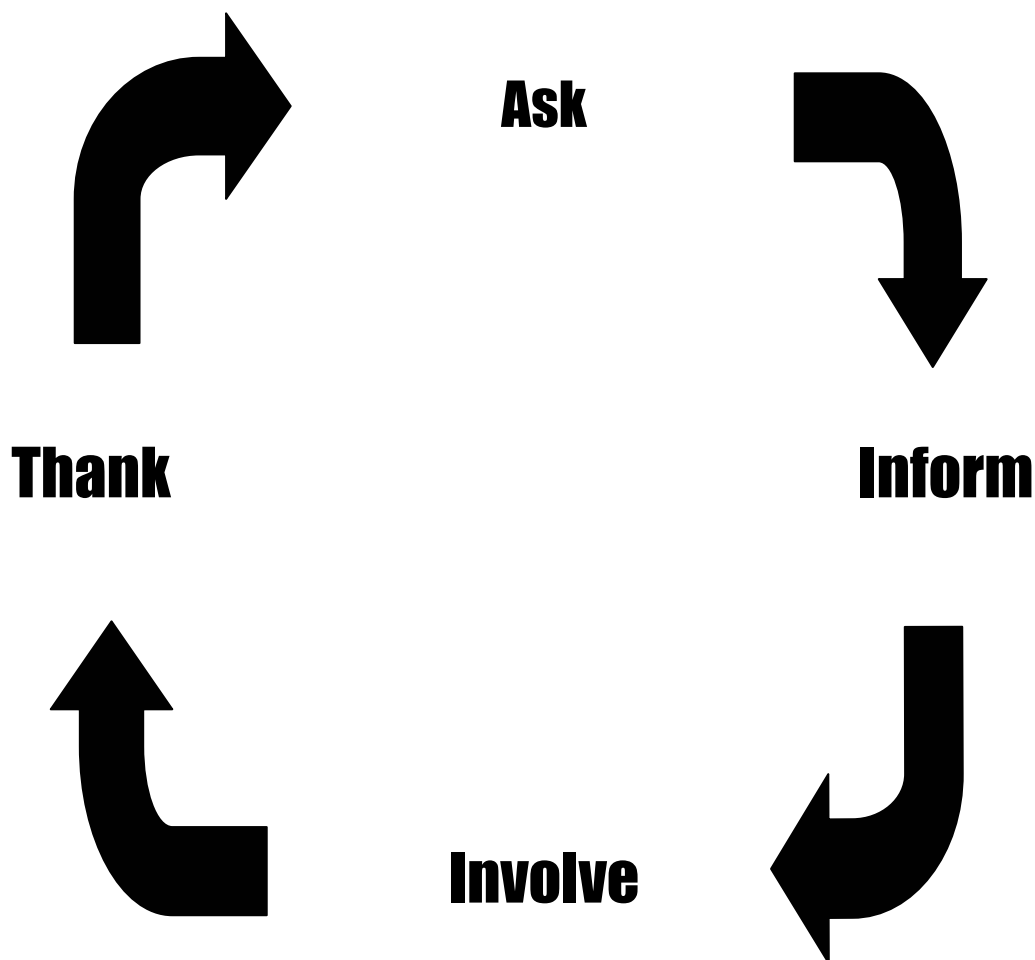
One-on-one Recruitment:

- Use personal connections. You want to learn this person's values and then help them see that the group is full of people with similar ideas.
- Try to make the individual feel like this is their organization, that they are welcome and that their voice is equally valued.
- Involve them in campaign planning, actions, and social events!

The recruitment and leadership development cycle

It is not the job of the group leader to plan everything and run every event. It is the job of the group leader to make sure everything is run well, and that the organization doesn't die when they leave. This means letting other people plan and run the events, and helping them to do it well.

When you are recruiting and developing new leaders, it is helpful to think of the endeavor as a process. You want to involve incrementally those you recruit in your organization. To do this, we use the recruitment and leadership development cycle, which serves as a helpful framework for ensuring that your recruitment is effective, and that your organization persists and grows stronger as the years go by.



Ask: You must find out what matters to the person. Why do they care? Why do they act? What do they think about this issue specifically?

Inform: You must show the person how your issue or your event relates to their thoughts, values, and interests.

Involve: You must find a way to involve the person in your issue or project. They should leave with something to do that matches their interests, and respects their schedule. In addition, try to build personal connections by involving them in social events – dinners, hikes, parties.

Thank: This is a fellow volunteer you are dealing with. There's something else they could be doing with their time. Showing them genuine appreciation is essential. You do this by simply thanking them when they agree to get involved and thanking them again when they've accomplished their task.

Then, repeat, repeat, repeat. You involve folks once, then involve them further—in the planning process for an event or a campaign, in recruitment for a rally or protest, in banner- or costume-making for your next street theater event. Ultimately you should have a core group of folks who will be competent and confident enough to carry on the torch once you leave.

Remember: When someone flakes out on you, the problem is often that they didn't understand a task well enough. It's worth your time to sit down with the person and describe the task, step by step. Also make sure to follow-up with the person you're trying to involve; remind them and help them out.

“...Wilderness Needs No Defense, Only More Defenders.” – Edward Abbey

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