



MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

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AN INTRODUCTION TO MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

All chapters should have a planned membership development program. Whether your chapter has 10 members or 210 members, a planned membership development program is essential to a successful, healthy chapter.

Membership development often takes a back seat to other aspects of your chapter. If you are wondering if your chapter has a lack of membership development, ask yourself the following questions:

Does it feel like no one in your chapter is taking membership development seriously?

Is it a priority of just a few?

Does it seem like the same few people are always the ones doing all of the work?

Are you having a hard time recruiting people for leadership roles?

Is it only the same few faces at each meeting?

One or more of these probably hit home with most of you. Don't worry, there is hope!

There are many aspects to membership development, but there are three basic and mutually supportive elements that must be present. Those are

Recruitment

Recruitment involves the identification of those people who we feel would be an asset to our chapter. It includes seeking them out, developing in them an interest in AMBUCS and motivating them to join our chapter.

Orientation

Orientation includes those efforts undertaken to integrate the new member into our chapter family. Orientation actually begins the first time we approach someone about AMBUCS and ends when the new member is totally involved in our chapter activities. It is a process of informing, helping and involving.

Retention

Retention is the culmination of recruitment and orientation. It results from a well-rounded program of chapter activities which deliver the product we sold during the recruitment and orientation processes.

The goal of this workshop is to give you a guideline to develop an effective **orientation** program within your chapter.

ORIENTATION BASICS

What is Orientation?

Orientation is an ongoing process. It begins during the recruitment phase. It is the warm hand of friendship extended to the new member that makes them feel comfortable and welcome.

It includes a special program that explains the AMBUCS™ organization, history and national projects. It includes information on your chapter and how it participates in community service projects. It explains to new members their roles, benefits and responsibilities in your chapter. It commonly invites spouses to special programs, socials and gives them an opportunity to know what AMBUCS is about.

Communication

Orientation is communication on a continuing basis. It is very important that new members receive chapter newsletters, understand what your chapter does and are encouraged and helped to become involved in AMBUCS. All members need to make an extra efforts to reach out to them to new members by making them feel welcome at events.

Buddy or Mentor Program

An idea to help get new members up to speed is to establish a buddy or mentor program within your chapter. “Assign” new members to existing chapter members. Have the chapter member (not the sponsoring member) be in charge of the new member to be sure that they come to meetings and take part in projects or social events. This is also a great way to work to alleviate cliques or “closed groups” within your chapter.

Orientation Committee

This committee plays an important role and should include active, experienced and enthusiastic members. The committee's function begins as soon as the new member is approved. They should:

- Make sure a new member packet is received and all presentation material is available at the induction ceremony.
- Coordination of the induction ceremony performed by the chapter president at the chapter meeting.
- Get together with the new member to:
 - Discuss the members talents and desires.
 - Help him/her complete the committee preference sheet, Form 1145.
 - Guide the member to at least one committee that he/she can be involved with immediately.
 - Introduce the new member to the committee chairperson.
 - Make sure the committee chairperson explains jobs that the new member can participate in, and that the new member becomes involved.

THE ORIENTATION MEETING

Schedule orientation meetings well in advance to give all chapter members an opportunity to attend. It should be a special, warm gathering with both new and existing chapter members. Perceptions of the new members and spouses will be long lasting and will contribute positively or negatively to their future in AMBUCS™. Make it fun and be creative! This should be a time for new members and long-time members alike to learn about the chapter.

Invite new members to bring their spouse, family member or someone close to them. It is really important that they understand the nature of our association. They need to know what membership means and how they can participate.

Orientation Program

Only you know what will work best for your chapter. If a formal program and dinner will just bore your members, then make it informal with refreshments and lots of time for fellowship. But, what is most important that you provide the appropriate content in the orientation program. You want the new member to leave orientation with a basic knowledge of the history and mission of AMBUCS™ (at the national and local levels), a good understanding of your local projects and a complete comprehension of what is expected of them as a member.

If you do chose to have a more formal program, the following is an example outline:

- I. **Get Acquainted Time:** 20 minutes (meet, greet, small talk)
- II. **Introductions** (10 minutes)
 - a. MC introduces self/spouse/guest and makes a formal welcome
 - b. New member introduces self/spouse/guest
 - c. All AMBUCS introduce self/spouse/guestEach person should say something brief about himself or herself.
- III. **Meal** (45 to 60 minutes if provided*)
- IV. **Orientation Program** (45 minutes)
 - a. A video such as the AmTryke® fundraising video
 - b. A program given by chapter members to include:
 - i. History and mission of AMBUCS™ nationally and locally
 - ii. A description of the national programs: AMBUCS Scholars-Scholarships for Therapists and the AmTryke® Project
 - iii. Your chapter's goals, funding, activities, etc.
 - iv. A description of expectations of membership (attendance, dues, etc.)
 - c. Explain to members their roles will be and what they will gain by being members.
- V. **Informal Discussion** (15 minutes)

Answer questions and give chapter members and opportunity to tell positive, personal AMBUCS experiences.

*Finish with refreshments if a meal wasn't provided