

# Nuts and Bolts of Recruitment

## **Step One: Identify the Potential Member**

It is important to map your campus and identify the potential members. Review the new hire list, campus staff list, and local campus member roster.

Be ready to explain who you are and what you are trying to accomplish. Refresh your memory on what you already know about the person's interests, experience, activities, family, etc., or have questions in mind to spark conversation on those topics if this is a new acquaintance. Don't try so hard -- when you relax and spend time just being yourself instead of closing, authenticity shines through and that's what potential members connect with.

### **Use the 80/20 Rule (Listen 80% / Talk 20%)**

Get ready to listen to learn about the potential member. It's time to tailor your conversation to what they care about. Listen carefully during conversations and learn about issues that motivate them.

## **Step Two: Legitimize Yourself**

Share a little bit about yourself, particularly points of connection you have with the other person. If you have places, people, experiences, or interests in common, share those. Mention other people they know, or organizations they are a part of, that have already joined your cause. Tell them about your organization's accomplishments.

## **Step Three: Listen**

You want to get to know the other person to set the foundation for a longer-term relationship, and to begin to imagine how their unique interests and talents might add to your effort. Listen to understand what issues and topics are important to this person, and also listen for any special skills, useful contacts, and organizational networks they may mention.

## **Step Four: Agitate / Inoculate**

Share truths about why you think their issue or effort is important. You are not trying to offend or be obnoxious, but neither will you passively accept excuses for people not getting involved. Help show them why this issue is important to them, tying it to the interests and passions they have expressed. It may be helpful to create a sense of urgency by putting a little pressure behind your pitch (although you should be careful of rushing the potential member or getting too pushy).

## **Step Five: Get a Commitment**

As silly as it sounds, sometimes we assume the member will join, so we don't directly ask them to join. While many potential members don't want a pushy TSTA rep, being clear and concise in asking someone to join is anything but pushy.

Before ending the conversation, ask the person to commit to a specific action such as attending the next meeting. Try to match the organization's needs to the person's interests and talents. It will only take you a minute to fill out the enrollment form. If the person starts to fill out the enrollment form, it is best not to interrupt them.

## **Step Six: Anticipate and Mitigate Objections**

Few recruitment efforts are seamless as oftentimes there are objections, even small ones, that can crop up. But part of being prepared is anticipating possible obstacles to closing. It is important to address concerns the potential member may have already shared with you.

**See "ANSWERING THE HARD QUESTIONS"**

## **Step Seven: Follow up**

Thank people for meeting with you and check in with them about the commitment they've made. When they come through on their promises, make it a point to recognize their efforts and contribution! Remind them that they can come to you if they have any questions. Continue building up the foundation for a long-term relationship.

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## Answering the Hard Questions

### **Q. “How will I afford it?”**

A. Many occupation groups pay dues that are twice ours. They do it because they realize that dues are an investment in their future welfare. For legal protection, political advocacy, professional insurance, discount economic services, the investment is small. Plus, as your dues are payroll deducted over the year, the cost per month is very affordable.

### **Q. “All of that is well and good, but I just don’t believe in joining anything. Why should I join?”**

A. If that is how everyone felt, we would still be paying taxes on tea from England. Until employees organized and lobbied collectively, where were salaries and benefits going? Until employees organized and entered the political arena, how many “letter writing campaigns” ended up in legislative wastebaskets?

While some people say they do not like to join organizations, not too many want to turn back increases that association lobbying has won. In short, some people would prefer to have it both ways – getting the benefits without the membership fee.

How about giving some thought to supporting the organization that supports you in almost everything that affects your career or your teaching.

### **Q. “But I will not really have a voice in what the Association does. Right?”**

A. You have a voice and a vote every time your local takes action. You also have direct representation at the state House of Delegates, the Advisory Committee, and the national Representative Assembly through the representatives you elect to office. Texas also has representatives on NEA’s Board of Directors.

### **Q. “Why are dues so expensive?”**

A. The small amount you pay enables the association to hire skilled advocates to do the things for us that we don’t have time to do since we are in the classroom. When the cost of protecting and improving one’s livelihood and profession is compared with other costs we incur, the Association dues are a tremendous bargain. In fact, considering what our members need and want, the dues may be too low.

### **Q. “I do not see what TSTA or NEA does that the local association cannot do. Would it not be better to spend my money with a local association?”**

A. If the local association were to attempt to provide legislative contacts, local dues would be unaffordable. Legislation is not produced by just writing letters to your representative. It takes a powerful lobby in the state capitol, too. A great deal of the information used by local associations is obtained from TSTA and NEA. Someone could be employed to gather these statewide statistics, but I doubt that many would want to foot the bill.

NEA has been directly involved in association problems in many state, regional, and local workshops, and conferences. TSTA and NEA staff provide resources in activities including crisis support, curriculum development, member benefits, membership promotion workshops, public relations support, and organizing workshops.

### **Q. “What if I do not agree with things the Association does?”**

A. We don’t expect everyone to agree with all ideas that surface in the Association. In a member-driven organization, we expect different points of view. Those differences enable us to be a better organization. When members voice their concerns it allows us to focus in a new direction. We encourage members to use their voting rights as a way to share their concerns.

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**Q. “Why should I join? I will get all the salary benefits anyway?”**

A. Maybe. School boards are getting more and more sophisticated and want to know how many people the Association represents. Representing some of the employees is not enough. Eighty percent is not enough. Is the Association representing the overwhelming majority, if not all, of the people? If not, we all might lose in lobbying efforts this year. Joining shows our elected officials that all of us are together.

**Q. “My wife (husband) also teaches. Why should we pay double dues?”**

A. Because you are guaranteed double benefits. Membership is not altogether unlike an insurance policy. If one of you has an accident, it does not help if the other is covered. The same thing applies if one of you needs legal assistance. Membership benefits come with membership. Unless both of you join, you are only giving half of your support to your own cause. We need strength and numbers in local, state, and national lobbying. Both of you have a big stake in the success of your association. Both should support it.

**Q. “Why should I be involved in politics? I do not believe school employees should be involved in politics.”**

A. You have a right to believe that, and you have a choice whether you want to contribute to the political action fund. You should know, however, that being involved in politics makes a difference. You only make things better when you work to make them better. Staying out of the system means you are ignored by those in the system. We aren't being ignored by politicians anymore. Think about it, every decision impacting education is a political decision -- from what you teach and what you are paid to how long you get to eat, and more.