

Membership Presentation

What is 'Membership'? According to my computer it is 'the state of being a member of a group, club, organization or collective.' We all have membership in many groups, family, Church, neighborhood, professions, clubs; some by choice, some by virtue of who or what we are. In addition, we are all Pilots.

WHY? Before we think in terms of increasing membership we need to know and understand why we chose Pilot and why we stay. What brought you to Pilot and why are you still here? This is where we need to start when we recruit new members. After your 'Elevator Speech' about what is Pilot you need back up and share your WHY along with an invitation.

HOW do we ATTRACT new members? One of the best ways to bring in new members is by personal invitation. Who do you know that is looking to get more involved in the community; perhaps a new neighbor, someone recently retired and looking for a new outlet or a mother whose kids are all now in school. Another source of potential members are other organizations that your club may partner with and/or support such as Alzheimer's Association or Alliance, your local food bank; Invite speakers from these organizations and share what you do with them. Your fundraisers are also an excellent place to show off who and what you are and invite people to join you. And don't forget a fun Share Pilot event!

In addition to personal interactions make sure you have a presence on social media. Post frequently to Facebook and Instagram highlighting your projects and activities and make it shareable. If you have a local paper have your meetings listed, seek publicity for your projects and fundraisers, make sure your community knows who and what Pilot is and does!

Now that we have new members, how do we RETAIN them? Why do you stay in Pilot? Probably two things, the sense of belonging and the mission. When someone comes to a meeting for the first time make sure they feel welcomed, introduce yourself, sit next to them, repeat their name and answer questions as they arise. Extend an invitation to return for your next meeting and, if possible, follow up with a phone call. Make sure they are welcomed as part of the group. Involve them in discussion and planning, ask their opinion and be open to new ideas. Provide training re: our focus and our structure so new members know what we are doing and why; they have no idea what we are talking about when we refer to a DAC or ECR, Fall Council or TBI camp so there needs to be training. Keep meetings organized, pleasant, informative and focused, always keeping in mind our goals as an organization.

Okay, you have done all this and maybe you have still lost members. What can be done to reclaim those who no longer attend? First, find out why they left and learn from it. One possible reason may be the cost of membership. Young families and individuals relying solely on Social Security may not be able to afford dues or attendance at Fall Councils or Conventions. If able, your club may consider offering scholarships to cover some or all of dues or registration fees. A young mother may need to bring a young child with her; can your club make allowances for this or help with child care arrangements? Another problem can be 'burn out'. Make sure no member works alone, cross train members so that if one person needs a break someone else can easily step in. Its counterpart is be open to sharing responsibility, don't think you are the only one who can do something, this limits someone else's

participation and can cause that person to leave the Club out of frustration. Lastly, be supportive of your club leadership. Taking on a leadership role, especially the Presidency can be stressful, especially for someone who hasn't been in Pilot for very long. Show appreciation and accept that everyone has their own style and it is good to stir things up once in a while!

Remember, a club that is active, inviting, accepting, focused on mission and open to new ideas will attract and retain new members so we can all "do more, care more and be more".