

Four Questions for Membership Concerns

Considerations for Volunteer, Social, and Fraternal Based Organizations

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At some point, probably recently since you are reading this, your organization has asked the great question “why is our membership dwindling?” The next questions is usually along the lines of “where do we get new members?” or “why are people not joining us?” The discussion presented here does not aim to give you tricks to membership recruitment, but to look at possible reasons your organization is in its current situation. Let’s look at four questions: “what are we”; “why am I a member”; “what do we offer new members”: and finally “what should we offer new members.”

Question 1: What are we?

You probably have the mission statement of your organization in mind with this question. For some this may be along the lines of providing charitable services, bringing professionals together, or some other such loft aspiration. Does the mission statement provide a worthy or noble ambition for the organization? It is a safe bet to say that it does. But, if membership concerns are coming into play, then it is also doubtful that the mission statement is truly what you are.

Let’s try a little exercise. In the next two minutes come up with a list of four things, 3-5 words per item max, that describe what your organization is to you personally. Don’t cheat and just list the points of your mission statement, be honest with yourself here and put down what it is for you. Ok, and go...

Got your list? Let me give you an example. Here is the quick list I came up with for a charitable fraternity I am involved with:

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