



Membership Recruitment and Retention: A Guide

Recruiting and retaining members isn't as easy as it looks. Recruitment is 365 days a year, and it can even double as retention. As members get busy with school, work, and other responsibilities, you may see a decline in participation. Don't be discouraged - just try your best to keep coming up with fresh new ideas and activities, and try to follow some of these tips.

Getting Started

Materials You Might Need

- **Poster Board Visuals:** Show members photo proof of the cool and fun events that happen every year. You can also showcase leadership and fellowship opportunities on the board. Tip: steer clear of too many words -- no one wants to read that!
- **30 Second Elevator Pitch:** What is Circle K all about? What makes it different from other service clubs on your campus? Why do you love it? Take a few minutes to draft out a quick 30 second speech that you can say to new members.
- **Banner, Gong, Gavel:** These are club essentials that are often bought by the sponsoring Kiwanis Club when your club chartered.
- **Pamphlets:** CKI has free pamphlets for you to get from the store.
<https://store.kiwanis.org/CKI/Subcategory/Literature.htm>
- **Free Pens:** We're getting a little more pricey here, but free pens are always enticing and you could put your club name and website so that students are reminded of who you are!
- **Free Candy:** Free candy is a sure fire way to make people want to check out your club.
- **Activities:** Have a fun opportunity for members to win a prize or do a quick service project! Examples:
 - **Jenga:** Have pieces with writings of fun prizes, quick service call-to-actions, or fun facts!
 - **Pay It Forward:** if we give you a piece of candy, won't you spread the happiness and give one to another person? We'll provide the sweet treats!
 - **Spin The Wheel:** everyone's a winner! Whether they land on a free hug, free candy, or get a surprise gift at the next meeting, this is a great way to attract new students.

- **Flyers or Leaflets:** Create simple leaflets that give your meeting information (where, when, day) and a quick few sentences about who you are. You can also say that if they go to your next meeting, they will win a prize or slice of pizza!

Where to Recruit

Activities Fair

Most schools hold an activities fair at the beginning of the year in order to introduce new students to the campus and its many clubs and activities. At the fair your club can set up a table display to inform students about Circle K.

There are many things that you can use to grab people's attention. Pictures, scrapbooks, videos, and flyers about Circle K are great ways to introduce yourselves to the campus. Free food or candy is also a sure way to have students stop by; some clubs have even had a cookout along with their activity booth.

It is also a very good idea to have service project sign up sheets at your table – this will ensure that you will see these students again. Most importantly you should have a sheet for people to write their name, phone number, and email address on. After the fair it is a good idea to call or email each person who has signed up.

You will need to contact the organization that is putting on the fair in order to reserve your table.

You should have at least two Circle K members at the table at all times to answer any questions that students may have.

Information Tables

Reserve a spot on campus to hold an info table. Just like you would at the Activities Fair, describe who you are and what you do for the community. Pass out fliers or advertise different service projects.

T-Shirts:

Wearing Circle K T-shirts around campus is publicity in itself however you can go one step further and get meeting information out there too. Have the board, and any members who are interested, get together and make t-shirts. This can be done inexpensively with white t-shirts and cloth paint. On these shirts you want to have the name Circle K along with the place and time that your club meets. Those who make the shirts should wear them the day before meetings. You can rotate weekly so that way someone is wearing a shirt each week and no one has to wear it every week. You can even contact craft stores for donations.

Posters

Make a visual of your club to hang around campus. Be sure to include meeting times, a point of contact, any social media sites or pages, and pertinent information about your club. You may need to get approval with your school to hang these in buildings

Fun Recruitment/Retention Events

Movie Night

Rent a new movie, that was recently in theatres (and was popular) and plan a movie night. You may want to plan for an early evening on Friday or Saturday, so as not to interfere with other things. Tell members to invite their friends and also publicize around campus. You will also want to reserve a very comfortable room to play the movie in. Have popcorn and drinks available.

You will need to work with your school to reserve a room and then see if you can get Costco or Wal-Mart to donate big bags of popcorn or a large portion of drinks.

Guest Speakers

Having guest speakers is a great way to bring in new members. It is good ideas to have your Kiwanis Club president speak at some time but you can also pull in members by having other professionals speak. You can have doctors, teachers, and so one come to speak. Depending on who is speaking you should publicize more around that school. For example, you should publicize around the school of education if you are having a professor or teacher speak. This can round out your membership to include a plethora or majors.

You will need to contact those who you plan to have speak at least three to four weeks in advance. You will also want to have a Circle K pen or something to give them as a thank you.

You may need a small committee or group of three to five members to plan the speakers. You could also have club members sign up for a month or week in which they would like to arrange the speakers. Someone should be in charge of the gifts as well.

Circle K Day

Have a Circle K Day on campus. All of your members should wear Circle K shirts or pins and hand out Circle K paraphernalia around campus – this can include pens, pamphlets and whatever else will get people's attention. The day can be ended with a cookout that is very visible on campus. This event should be promoted around campus prior to the big day.

You will of course need to check with your school about locations for the cookout. You may also want to work on getting some donations.

Partner Up

Partner up with a sorority, fraternity, or other campus club for a service project. Having two or more groups together can increase the amount of work you can get done on a service project as well as introduce your club to another group of students. Most sororities and fraternities are required to do a certain amount of service each year so they will, more than likely, be glad to help out. Even if this doesn't help you gain members, it will help with your project.

Email Exchange

Most clubs have large email lists that they send information out on. If you ask another club or organization to trade information you can give them a copy of your email list and they will in turn give you a copy of theirs. With this arrangement there should be a stipulation that only one email is allowed, this way your members will not get bombarded with emails. You can then send an email of invitation to the members of the other club.

B.Y.O.B. (Bring your own Banana):

Bring your own Banana. Advertise this around campus and then at your meeting have the makings for a banana split. Anyone who did bring their own banana can make a banana split and those who didn't can have a sundae.

Contact a local grocery store to get some donations for this event.

Intramural Sports

See if your club has any interest in playing an intramural sport. They have a wide selection of sports and varying degrees of competitiveness, so no one has to be a pro to play. The team that plays together stays together!

Group Dinners

Hold a group dinner in one of the dining halls on campus before the meeting. This is a good way to socialize before the meeting and help strengthen the bond between members.

Retention

The key to keeping members coming back is making every month exciting and every meeting purposeful. Good planning is key when trying to keep member interest.

Organization & Consistency

Part of what can help keep members and having consistent projects and a diversity of projects.

Monthly Agenda

Make each meeting/month jam-packed with service and fellowship events. This is a sample guide of how to plan each month. The number of meetings and projects will depend on the size of your club and campus environments.

Big meeting at the beginning of the month to showcase the plans for events and projects for the next couple of weeks.

Example:

- 2 service projects (off-site)
- 1 in-meeting project or on-site project
- 1 social event
- 1 icebreaker (See the Icebreaker Guide)

Planning for Each Month Diversity of Projects and Causes

Part of what makes Circle K a great service club is that we care about any cause that a member cares about. Planning for the year should include taking this in account. Plan early to ensure that your club members can participate in events and partner with local organizations. Your club events should be a range of service, leadership, and fellowship events. Make sure to look out for fun events that will align with your member's interests and schedules.

Examples of Important Weeks and Months:

- Kiwanis Pediatric Lyme Disease Week
- K-Family Week
- Kiwanis Family Month (November)
- Prematurity Awareness Month

TIPS

- Watch out for cliques. They form in every organization and they can be disastrous. You can stop cliques by having events and socials that everyone can go to. For example, if you have a weekly dinner social, plan it at different times every week so that every week there is a different group of members attending.
- Redundancy. Sometimes we get set in our ways and this might bore some people. Don't be afraid to try something different at a meeting. Also, try new projects and socials. Make it a point to do something new every week in some way.
- Many recruitment ideas can also help keep your current members active. By making bonds with new members via the Buddy Program or the "Meet-'n-Greet" old members will be more likely to stay involved.
- Cater your projects and meetings to the membership. If your members like projects dealing with animals, then set up more animal related projects and programs.
- Track your members. Keep track of attendance at meetings, projects, and events. By knowing which members are declining in their participation, you can target them specifically with your retention efforts.

- Give members a call when you notice someone hasn't been around in a while. A big reason why someone quits a club is because they sometimes feel like nobody in the club cared about them. Show them you care by giving them a call!
- **MAKE THINGS FUN!** People will love coming to club meetings when they know they are going to be a good time. Be friends with your members and help them have fun.