

## **Recruitment Skills**

The definition of Recruitment is best seen in the term: "Making Friends". It is only logical that a man will join the group with which he feels most at home. The Chapter that congregates only with themselves during a Recruitment function will come across as a group of snobs or as a cluster of morons. The chapter whose members can only discuss hometown, majors or the weather may appear to be comprised of shallow personalities. This may not be the case at all. Maybe all that is missing are a few interpersonal communication skills, something relatively simple to improve. The prospect's perception of the chapter may not be true, but to him, his perceptions are facts.

With this general philosophy in mind, one has a framework for the specific points of communications skills. These include:

- a) starting the conversation,
- b) keeping it on interesting topics,
- c) showing genuine interest in what the other person is saying,
- d) remembering names, and so on.

## Facilitating the Conversation

The purpose of conversation is to have all parties learn something about each other and to create a comfortable atmosphere in which friendship can develop. There are a number of points to consider in the achievement of a warm and interesting conversation, but the idea is to make the guest feel at home, start a conversation, and keep it going. The points below will help provide a general structure to remember from your introduction until you exit.

- Be confident in yourself!
- Approach the guest with a broad smile, firm handshake, enthusiasm.
- Introduce yourself first.
- Make sure the prospect feels at home.
- Offer to get him some refreshments.
- Be aware that he might be interested in seeing the house or the chapter's scrapbooks.
- NEVER, NEVER, NEVER leave a guest standing alone.
- Try to introduce him to brothers with similar interests, especially if you cannot find any common ground yourself.

Always introduce him to someone else and get a conversation going before moving on!! A successful event is one where a great number of members meet a great number of prospects.

### Possible Conversation Topics

Of course there is more to a good conversation than the outline of movement above. For one thing, just what do you talk about? The best of all possible subjects is the prospect/chapter visitor himself. It makes the guest feel at home and lets him know you are sincerely interested in his friendship.

A good approach is to ask a general question which will reveal the chapter visitor's interests. Listen to what he says. Let the chapter visitor do the talking, but be sure you have topics of conversation in reserve to keep the ball rolling. Possible topics to keep in mind are:

- His move to college, his old friends, new friends
- His background
- His high school interests and activities
- His future plans, goals
- His view of college so far
- His girlfriend, family, the classes he is taking
- Current events
- Sports, music, books, movies, summer jobs
- His feeling about the residence hall and his first roommate
- Upcoming college and chapter events
- His hobbies and interests
- Hunting, fishing, camping, backpacking, photography
- Fraternities (that is what he is there for)
  - Advantages of FarmHouse membership
  - Why you joined
  - What you have gained
  - What he is looking for in a fraternity
- FarmHouse: programs, ideals, philosophies, Barndances/Hayrides, faculty dinners, halloween parties, homecomings, Leadership Conferences, Conclave, international brotherhood, intramurals, spring formal, service projects, alumni associations, etc.

The brothers should also be prepared to answer any questions the rushees are thinking about, and it is important that these questions be answered honestly and straightforwardly. This opens other possible topics of conversation such as:

*"Why did you pledge the chapter?"*

*"What is the value of fraternity membership?"*

*"How much does it cost?"*

*"What important events comprise your history, etc?"*

*"How much time does it take?"*

*"How will it affect my grades?"*

*"Should I wait until my Sophomore year?"*

*"Will I be required to live in the chapter house?"*

In addition to our speaking and conversation habits we must be aware of our body language. If your handshake is like a wet rag, it will give the impression that we are bored, lazy or not

interested. The same goes for yawning, poor posture and wandering eyes. We must be alert and attentive, but through our actions. Actions speak louder than words.

### Remembering Names

Remembering a person's name is an art many of us have not mastered. However, it is quite obvious that if we can remember a prospect's name when we see him on campus he is going to be impressed. Below is a brief outline that may assist some people in remembering names. Further, this subject would make an excellent chapter program--contact someone in the speech department or counseling center.

- 1) Do not look directly at a visitor's face when hearing his name for the first time. This eliminates competition between sight and sound stimuli, overcoming the dominate visual impulse which causes you to remember the fact but not the name. In fact, many of the best "name remembering" people actually turn their heads away from the person they are meeting, as if listening for a soft sound in a room full of noise.
- 2) Be sure to hear the name. If you did not get it, admit it. Some people ask the guest to repeat his name and then they repeat the name again to themselves. And when shaking hands, do not release your grip until you have the name.
- 3) Try to spell the name, or ask the person to spell it for you.
- 4) Make a remark about the name--to yourself or to the person. Think of someone you know with the same name and make a mental connection; or mentally place the person you know on the new man's shoulders.
- 5) Use the name again and again in the conversation. Besides reinforcing your own memory, this technique makes the guest feel more welcome and at ease.
- 6) Make it a point to introduce the guest to other men during the course of conversation. This reinforces your own memory and helps your brothers as well, emphasizing the sound of names on a more universal chapter level.
- 7) Use his name again when you say good-bye.

Of course, the use of name tags during recruitment events is one of the best ways to help brothers and chapter visitors alike to remember names.

### Things to Consider Not Doing and Some Alternatives

The following is a quick list of things not to do while talking with prospective members. In addition, suggested alternatives are also listed:

DO NOT use the expression, "I don't believe I've met you before".

Be informal. Say, Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_(either wait for him to say his name, or say; "what's yours?")

DO NOT release the handshake until you are sure of a visitor's name.

Listen to his name and.... concentrate.

DO NOT talk about yourself.

Listen to the guest and talk about what interests him...not necessarily you. Satisfy his ego needs.

DO NOT criticize any other fraternity or any individual.

It is much more impressive to say good things about other fraternities. Besides, the number one chapter has no reason to criticize others. Only the inferior chapters will feel any need to criticize at all.

DO NOT leave any guest alone by himself for any reason.

There is nothing more uncomfortable than being alone among strangers. Make them feel a part of the group.

DO NOT refer to a recruitment guest as a "rushee".

He is a "Guest of the Chapter".

DO NOT congregate in large groups at the entrance to the house.

All the brothers should be on the first floor, but spaced about. There will always be early and latecomers.

DO NOT try to put on a phony appearance for prospects.

You should be as natural as possible. But do clean up and look presentable. "Like" attracts "like". You will attract what you appear to be. During recruitment events it is strongly recommended to refrain from smoking, chewing tobacco, etc.

DO NOT lie to a guest about your fraternity status (scholarship, intramurals,

finances, etc). It is ridiculous to do so, and your respect and credibility will drop to zero.

DO NOT criticize brothers in your own chapter for their weaknesses or yours as well. Speak, rather, of their personal accomplishments and goals attained.

DO NOT act bored regardless of how tired you are.

This not only affects the guests, but the effect on the chapter is devastating. Maintain your enthusiasm!

DO NOT use foul language around guests.

It really accomplishes nothing, and it may very well offend someone.

DO NOT attempt to convince a man to join if he cannot afford it.

The pressures on him and the problems created for the chapter are simply not worth it.

DO NOT be rude to anyone.

It will merely alienate the guest, and he may react by verbally talking bad about FarmHouse with other prospects.

DO NOT rush to the refreshment line, guest go first!!

But not all first...mix up guests and brothers, but when in doubt - wait!

DO NOT congregate with other groups of brothers (we have plenty of time to talk about the party). They may get the impression that no one is interested in them. Remember to individualize recruitment as much as possible.

DO NOT maintain a sloppy appearance.

Dress appropriately for the occasion and ask everyone else to do the same. Wearing your fraternity pin is appropriate and says that you are proud of your fraternity.

DO NOT criticize a chapter visitor in the presence of another.

It may be a friend of his that you are talking about; and besides, it is not consistent with FarmHouse gentlemanly conduct.

DO NOT give up if a prospect wants to wait to join.

A continued effort and personal interest shown in him will almost always end in his joining at a later date.

DO NOT apologize for your weak points.

Discuss further plans for reinforcement and also those areas where you are particularly strong.

DO NOT talk only about hometowns, majors, etc.

Remember: listen to what the guest has to say, and then discuss his interest.

### Handling Objections

Never argue with a prospect. There are other ways to handle objections and overcome them. The following four-step method is one procedure to practice and keep in mind:

- 1) Hear him out without interruption; let the prospect tell you his objections or concerns;
- 2) Before answering the objection, lower the prospects resistance with a

- softening-up statement, such as "I can understand that; I had the same problem before I decided to join";
- 3) Convert the objection into a question which can be answered; and
  - 4) Answer his question.

If a recruitment guest has one small objection that cannot be overcome, identify all things he likes about FarmHouse. Let him construct a scale to place his likes and dislikes in perspective.

Remember that objections arising out of misunderstanding can be overcome. Objections based on real facts cannot be overcome. However, when brothers hear objections to membership based on misunderstandings and misinformation, they should be prepared to discuss **facts!** Some common objections and methods of handling them follow:

**Objection: "I am afraid the fraternity will hurt my grades."**

The simple facts are the best answers. Statistically, a greater percentage of entering freshmen who join a fraternity graduate from college than do non-fraternity men. Also, the all-fraternity average is higher than the all-men's average in the vast majority of colleges. Cite specific academic achievement of your chapter, chapter average, scholarship programs, library, etc.

*"I can understand that, I had the same thought when I joined my freshmen year. How about I explain to you how FarmHouse can actually help you improve and get good grades by joining?" (Explain your scholarship programs, GPA statistics, etc. Show the guest exactly how much time it takes, and that being a fraternity man does not take away from your study time.) "Did you know that being in an international fraternity adds about 50% to your chances of graduating?"*

**Objection: "I don't have the time."**

*"Time is a concern for everyone in college. The big thing is learning how to budget your time. The fraternity can help you with this. You will find that you have much more free time in college than you did in high school. There are certain functions of the fraternity which will require time such as new member meetings and projects, but for the most part, you will be on your own initiative to meet your requirements during a new member period. I must say, though, the more you put into the fraternity the more you will get out of it."*

**Objection: "I don't have the money."**

*"It does cost to be a member and it is important that everyone carries his share. It doesn't cost as much as you would think, though. You have to pay an initiation fee of \$xx. This fee is paid only once and goes for operation of the International Fraternity. In addition, International Dues are \$xx per year while you are in college. For that money, we...(expand on services). Chapter dues are \$xx a month which averages to \$xx a week. For that you get..."* Break it down. (Compare to residence hall costs).

**Objection: "What about hazing?"**

*"Our Fraternity doesn't haze pledges. We believe you are a man, and we see no reason to make you put up with childish pranks. It is against our International Fraternity and chapter policies, and we simply don't allow it to go on. I know how you feel about it. I never would have put up with hazing if I had to go through it. In fact, we have a saying in FarmHouse, 'you can't build men by tearing down boys'"*.

**Objection: "I've heard your chapter is weak."**

Ask him what he specifically means by "weak". Answer his concerns honestly and directly. Turn this into a challenge. Offer him the chance to be one of the members who will build the chapter up and make it strong again. Tell him that his chance to make his influence felt is great in your chapter. If he is a strong individual, this benefits the chapter and him. Be honest about your weaknesses, but be certain to outline the chapter's plans for improving, and point out the strengths of the chapter.

**Objection: "It won't contribute to my career."**

*"Employers and graduate schools look over the entire resume of prospective employees and grad students. Fraternity membership provides leadership opportunities and experiences in working with groups of people. It is indicative of a well-rounded person, one who handles himself with ease and confidence in social settings. Furthermore, fraternity alumni involved with chapters often provide valuable leads and recommendations to members in their search for jobs or graduate schools."*

**Objection: "But, I like living in the dorm."**

If your chapter requires members to live in the house: *"At first, I felt the same way. However, let me show you the benefits of living in the chapter house."*

Answer this by asking questions you know will get a negative response: *"Are you able to pick the people you live with in the residence hall? Do the guys in the hall help you with your studies? Will you have a place to come back to after graduation?"*

Brotherhood is the key concept here. Show him how it is nice to have people who care for you around when you need them. Invite him to your house. It is probably much more attractive than the residence hall. Tell him about the chance for individuality in the room he chooses, the decor and other places where he can make himself felt. In addition to that, discuss the advantages of having all the friends he made in the residence hall along with all the new ones he will make here.

**Objection: "It looks good, but I think I will wait."**

*"You are right, you should be sure when you join a fraternity. For some it is probably best to wait. However, if I can show you the benefits of joining now, will you consider it?"* (Explain the activities that he may miss out on if he waits).

A quarter or semester of fraternity experience, which you know to be good, is a great loss. Also, show him that he may be part of a great new member class, if you have already signed up some people. Have him talk with one or two brothers who waited for a term or two. Have them point out what they felt left out because they delayed joining.

**Objection: "My parents don't want me to pledge a fraternity."**

*"That is easy to understand--at first my parents felt the same way. But, if your parents agree, then would you consider joining?"* (Many parents have no idea of what a fraternity is and for this reason may object. You must talk to the parents and make them aware of all of the benefits of joining a fraternity--scholarship, friendship, leadership, etc. A personal visit is best in the home or chapter house. In many cases, a phone call will do the job. Involve the chapter advisors and/or association members in this process with the parents).

If the parents are present at this visit, you have taken the first step to meeting their objections. Ask them what their specific objections are and answer them honestly. If they are not present, offer to meet with them at their convenience or by phone. Again, answer the objections honestly.

**Objection: "My friend is going to pledge another fraternity and we want to be in the same one."**

*"One of my best friends is a member of a different fraternity, so I know how you feel. But joining different fraternities, is not all bad for a friendship. By joining different ones, you both will increase your acquaintances and friends. Our fraternity has many good friends in other fraternities, but we do not let them influence our actions to the point of conformity."*

Other objections may arise. The Vice President of Recruitment should structure a workshop discussion around situations which seem to continually recur at your particular chapter.