

# 99 Ways to Get New Members

Developed by



26 May 2021

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The past year has been challenging for many Member Organizations (MOs), hasn't it? Many struggled to keep the basic operations running and integrity of the organization intact.

In 2020, WAGGGS spoke to 115 MOs and 95% of them have suspended in-person activities and expected loss of membership due to results of the pandemic. MOs expressed concern and asked WAGGGS for things like:

- More GG/GS online safety,
- Support in crisis management,
- Different delivery of programmes and resources,
- Concern about membership figures,
- Improve visibility of GG/GS,
- Financial aid and fundraising, and
- Adapting to “new normal”.

So, taking action and finding efficient ways to retain the existing members and recruit new ones in the upcoming months is essential to keep Girl Guiding, Girl Scouting and Scouting alive and strong for future generations!

Have you been struggling with declining membership numbers? Have you experienced lack of direction how to keep the existing and go about recruiting new members?

You are either large or small membership organization? It does not matter; we have some tips and ideas for you.

On the next pages you will find some inspirational and proven ideas to help you get started. Some are quick to plan and try out, some will take more planning and time. Adapt them to your situation, needs and resources.

No matter what your membership vision, targets or plans are, we encourage you to look at the ideas below and just give some a go!

The list includes 99 ideas you can use to attract new members and retain the existing ones. Ideas are divided into several categories, so you can easily skip through sections.

### Get help from current members

1. **Host a “bring a friend” meeting**  
Encourage members to bring someone. This could even be a recurring event so that new members are continually bringing new friends.
2. **Reach out to former members**  
Some people might be ready to come back.

3. **Encourage members to share your newsletter (printed or e-newsletter)**  
Especially if they are featured in it!
4. **Invite members' families to events**  
Siblings, cousins and parents are all potential members (parents as volunteers).
5. **Help current members develop an "elevator speech" about their membership**  
Why are they members? What is the biggest benefit of being a Girl Guide (GG), Girl Scout (GS) (member)? Can they explain the purpose of the movement and GG / GS group?
6. **Ask your members for recruitment ideas**  
They may have an idea you have not thought of before or know about opportunities within their own social networks.
7. **Offer business cards with contact and info how to join to your members**  
It is an easy way for them to point people to your organization or group and share more easily with their networks. The cards have a line for the referral source, so the member can get a credit (discount in a GG / GS shop or other benefit) for referring someone new.
8. **Offer an alternate meeting time to attract people with different schedules**  
Is your meeting time leaving out a whole group of people, like those with afternoon school schedule, jobs, weekends leavers or early bedtimes? Switch up your offerings to attract more people. Try a meeting on an unlikely day and time and see what happens.
9. **Volunteer as a GG / GS group**  
You will get to do good as well as meeting other volunteers in your space.
10. **Coach members on creating a welcoming experience**  
Getting potential new members to attend meetings is only half the battle! Remind current members to greet newcomers and avoid GG / GS or group's special jargon when there are visitors (potential new members).
11. **Ask members to list their membership in their professional bios**  
It gets your MO's name in front of more people, builds your organization's prestige, and reminds members to talk about it.
12. **Create an invitation email template your members can use**  
Make it easy for members and volunteers to send invitations by doing most of the work for them. You could also create paper-based pamphlets or member application forms, or template texts that current members can copy-and-paste into emails or social media (Instagram, Facebook) messages that they send to friends.
13. **Give members a button or pin and encourage them to wear it**  
Make sure it is stylish so members will be more likely to wear it, and people will ask what it is about.
14. **Conduct exit interviews with departing members and volunteers**  
When you know why people are leaving, you can better start figuring out ways to keep them.

**15. Create perks for members who recruit new members**

Little perks and freebies can really motivate people. Think about gift certificates, a shout-out at your next meeting or a mention in a social media post or newsletter.

**16. Create a promotional video**

Members can share it with their contacts, and you can share it on social media.

**17. Thank your members regularly**

There are a few different ways you can do that. Here are just a few:

- Create a video thank-you message from the leader of your MO or a local group, and publish it on your website, your social media profiles, and your email newsletter.
- Each year, make a list of all the events, services, and educational opportunities that were made possible by your membership fees. Publish the list on a separate page on your site, and link to it on a regular basis in your online content and email campaigns.
- Host a yearly event to say “thank you” to your members. Consider a member brunch, picnic, pool party, or other fun gathering. It can also be done online.
- Write handwritten thank-you notes to your members. In our digital age, a personalized note is even more meaningful and memorable.

**18. Assign especially engaged members a “recruitment role”** You can also hold special recruitment meetings to give these members tools and encourage them to recruit new members – or give them a few minutes in every meeting to announce their results and ask for help.

Among your target members, what kind of individuals would make great recruiters because of their personal/professional networks? You can grow your membership exponentially if you can find a way to enlist these members.

**19. Film member stories and testimonials**

Publish them to your website and social media so you can give prospective members a visual reminder of just how engaged your current members are.

**20. Personally, follow up with every prospect**

When somebody signs up for local group’s event, either at that event or afterwards, follow up with each one of them personally and ask them if they want to join... Probably about 95% want to join after that.

**21. Launch a direct mail campaign**

If you can acquire a mailing list, or if you reach out to lapsed members, you might see success! There are mailing platforms you can use for free!

**22. Launch a telephone outreach campaign**

Create a goal to reach out to all the prospective members in your contact database. First, simply list all the prospects and contact them one by one over the phone. By the end of the year, we are confident you will reach several members through this initiative. People like to be recognized, seen and heard, and would respond more positively if addressed personally and directly.

## Website recruitment ideas

### 23. Create a MO / local group's website

As long as your potential members can find you online, even a simple site can do the trick!

### 24. Add a "Join Us" section to your website

People need to know you are accepting new members and how to join you. You can also include convincing elements like testimonials from current members and the benefits of joining your organization.

### 25. Set up Google Analytics or link to other tracking tools

This will help you find out the most effective methods for getting new website traffic so you can double down on them.

### 26. Make online registration as easy as possible

If you include online member application forms, anyone coming across your website will be much more likely to register than if they have to mail in a paper form. Keep the contacts updated on your website so a potential member can reach out and get directed to a local group promptly.

### 27. Refine your member benefits

Make them as clear and enticing as possible in your website copy so that prospective members can't help but be impressed.

### 28. Create member-only sections on your website

Including a section on your website that normal visitors can't see can help generate interest – they'll come across it and wonder what more they're missing out on.

## Event recruitment ideas

29. **Offer one event a year at your 'members-only' rate.** If you usually have one rate for members and another for non-members, pick one signature event and offer it to anyone at the members price. This is a great demonstration of the kind of value they will get if they do decide to join, which you should be sure to mention during said event!

### 30. Invite guests to meetings

Let prospective members see what they are getting into by inviting them to your group's meetings. Say first three or five meetings and after they need to choose either to join in or not.

### 31. Create a welcome packet for event guests

Include things like the mission, vision, basic information, calendar, and contact information, as well as information about becoming a member.

### 32. Follow up with guests

Send an email or postcard or make a phone call thanking the guest for attending and

asking if they are considering membership. Sending out a post-event survey can also help you see what went well and what you can improve for next time.

**33. Sponsor a local event**

Include your MO's or local group's name and logo on promotional materials, and make sure event organizers have your information for anyone who asks.

**34. Give a talk about your MO / local group at other organizations**

Share your mission and activities with other similarly minded people (NGOs, schools, kindergartens, clubs...).

**35. Host activities for members and non-members alike**

A group activity is an excellent way to meet new people. Something like a beach clean-up or other community service projects can attract a wide range of prospective members.

**36. Walk or build a float for town parades**

You will put your local group in front of the whole town, and look good doing it!

**37. Host seasonal meet-and-greets with a fun activity**

Think about a fall harvest day, a winter hot cocoa party, a spring nature walk, or a summer ice cream social to attract new members.

**38. Have a booth at a fair or festival**

Give volunteers talking points to introduce your local group to the community.

**39. Have a meeting in a public location like a park or square**

It draws attention and is a low-commitment way for curious potential members to check you out.

**40. Host a guest speaker**

Guest speakers attract non-members who share your interests. Such as national or local TED or TEDx talks. *Speakers spread ideas through powerful talks of 20 minutes or less. Over the last 30 years, they have brought in nearly 100,000 speakers to speak on everything from science to self-confidence. This has been so effective that on their YouTube channel alone they have already garnered over two billion views.*

**41. Host a charitable event like a run or a walk**

You'll raise money for a good cause and introduce your local group to new people who also support the cause.

**42. Host a spotlight event for local businesses**

Local business owners will learn about each other, and about you (they are your potential donors).

**43. Hold diverse events to appeal to a variety of age groups**

If all your events appeal to one group of people, mix things up by hosting an event to appeal to a different one.

**44. Host a homemade meal (breakfast, brunch, picnic, snack)**

Never underestimate the power of free food to bring people to an event. Don't forget to take donations for the meal!

**45. Host a charity fun run or cycling event**

It turns out that fun runs or fun country walks are one of the most popular way small local, non-profits like GG / GS to raise funds, increase member participation, and minimize coordination costs.

**46. Host your annual conference or general assembly in a new location**

Every year, choose a new city to host its annual conference (this depends on the size of your country too). This allows them you to present GG / GS to different communities. During the event, you can promote the benefits of joining the organization.

**47. Consider attendance options**

Are your attendance requirements onerous? Experiment to see if a more flexible policy is more attractive.

**48. Host low commitment meet and greets at a local group's quarters**

Invite prospects to come for a juice and snack (coffee or tea for potential adult volunteers), simply to learn about your group and meet your members.

## Digital marketing recruitment ideas

**49. Experiment with Facebook or Google ads**

Online advertising can target demographics precisely, putting your group in front of the people who are most likely to be interested. If you are a registered non-profit, you can also apply for a Google Ad Grant.

**50. Create a content marketing strategy**

Starting a podcast, creating a webinar, or writing articles that are on topics your potential members would be interested in and sharing them out can help generate more interest in your MO and local groups.

**51. Start focusing on SEO**

SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is the process of optimizing your website so that it is more easily able to be found by Google.

**52. Create a complete Membership Funnel**

Give potential members offers at every stage, from those who are just starting to learn about your organization to those who are already on the fence about joining.

**53. Create an email marketing campaign**

Once potential members have come to your website, ask them for their email in exchange for something they want (for example, offer them a downloadable guide to plants on some outdoor activities or crafts). Then, continue emailing them with ideas and tips so that they can see the value of joining your organization.

**54. Create retargeting ads**

Ever wondered why you keep seeing ads for the same store online after you visited their website? Those are called retargeting ads, and you can set them up too for your organization!

**55. Send a win-back email to lapsed members**

This can also include a discount in the GG / GS shop, membership discount or other incentive to re-join. You can also ask them for feedback regarding the reasons they left, which can help reduce your churn overall.

**56. Create an online community**

Make it easy for new members to sign up, then add other incentives to join your organization. Facebook groups are great for this!

**57. Run online promotions during peak sales times**

For example, you could host a Black Friday sale of items in your GG / GS shop and promote it across your social media channels.

## Social media recruitment ideas

**58. Create a LinkedIn profile for your organization**

This is particularly good for professional associations (also for GG / GS). If your members can add you to their professional profile, your organization can more easily attract other people with similar qualifications and interests.

**59. Create or update other social media accounts of your MO / local group**

This will help prospective members find you, and let current members easily share about the group with their friends.

“Facebook is a big source for us, by using public Facebook and Instagram page and by finding prospective members in various groups, you can reach out to them directly to recruit them.

**60. Encourage members to share local group’s activities on social media**

Create a photo release package so that you get permission to tag them in pictures. This will ensure the photos show up in their friends’ feeds as well.

**61. Create social media packages for members comprised of graphics, posts, links, and resources they can share**

People are much more likely to share out your information if you have given them a clear plan on how to do so.

**62. Use emotional storytelling**

Storytelling can be an effective tool and created stories can be shared on social media. Stories trigger our emotions.

## Traditional marketing recruitment ideas

**63. Put up flyers around town**

Look for community bulletin boards and high traffic spots like grocery stores and coffee shops.

64. **Create an informational brochure about your MO / local group**  
Include the group's mission and activities, as well as contact information.
65. **Place MO / local group's materials at related businesses**  
GG / GS, put your information at the outdoor equipment and craft supplies store. Think about where people who share your interests are likely to be.
66. **Announce group's meetings in local newsletters**  
Look for neighbourhood and special interest newsletters, whether online or on paper.
67. **Put your meetings on community calendars (but stay safe)**  
Usually, you can submit your information quickly online, and get listed quickly.
68. **Submit your group's information to local directories**  
Your NGO network or other local groups may publish a directory – list your organization!
69. **Place an advertisement in the local paper**  
Paid advertising can pay off if you select publications potential members read.
70. **Put an advertisement on the radio**  
Let the community know about your group or its events in a short radio message.
71. **Send media releases to local outlets when your MO or local group completes a project**  
Learn to write a press release so you can attract media attention to your MO / local group.

## Networking recruitment ideas

72. **Network with other local groups and organizations**  
Work together to increase your visibility. Consider hosting a social mixer to get to know each other.
73. **Visit a Chamber of Commerce meeting**  
Connect with your local movers and shakers – some of them are looking for groups and clubs, local charities and NGOs to sponsor or join as volunteers, be willing to share your information with others.
74. **Introduce your local group to local businesses**  
Send a letter or stop by and introduce yourself. Bring along your informational brochure and group's business card.
75. **Introduce your group to local government**  
Send a letter or make an appointment to introduce yourself and share your informational materials.
76. **Create a referral program**  
Incentivize your current GG / GS members and volunteers to bring their friends.

**77. Reach out to universities and colleges in your area**

Students may be interested in joining as older branch members or volunteers, or you can partner with them for events. You may even be able to offer this as a member benefit.

## Organizational recruitment ideas

**78. Put up a sign at your meeting place**

It is amazing how many people discover organizations by simply walking or driving past their sign.

**79. Report on your membership numbers and goal progress**

Keep the members up to date on how recruiting is going to motivate them to help.

**80. Consider the affordability of dues and events**

Consider if the dues and event prices are a barrier to potential members. Tiered membership or special rates may result in more interest. You can also reorganize your membership model to better reflect different membership values.

**81. Make sure your contact information is up to date on national and organization-wide directories**

Often these are posted and then forgotten. You may have information out there that is not correct.

**82. Remove barriers to attendance**

Think about what might stand in the way of joining and try to resolve those issues. For example, you could meet near public transport, or provide childcare to volunteers during meetings.

**83. Create a MO / local group's bumper sticker**

Put your name out on the road!

**84. Consider membership tiers**

If full membership requires too much commitment, maybe a lesser commitment (with fewer privileges, but also lower fees) would appeal to new people.

**85. Offer a trial period for new members before they pay membership fee**

If there is no cost for trying it out, potential members may stay long enough to see how much they like your local group.

**86. Create a membership drive budget**

Ads, events, and promotional materials all cost money. Prioritize your membership recruitment by budgeting for it.

**87. Offer online registration and payment**

Make it easy to join your MO / local group without paper forms or checks.

**88. Give away something free to new members**

The chance to win a prize always attracts interest.

- 89. Create a structured yearly recruitment plan**  
Check out the other MOs for an example of what this could look like.
- 90. Create new programs that might entice more diverse members**  
You could create a mentorship program for new members. Or offer educational courses to external public that are related to your central mission.
- 91. Make membership free**  
Make membership by donation if you can afford it of course.
- 92. Designate a Welcome or Membership chairperson**  
Increasing membership is a worthy effort, so appoint a team captain to head it up.
- 93. Set a membership goal**  
A concrete goal encourages members to recruit new people and puts everyone on the same page.
- 94. Talk to other similar organizations to see how their membership efforts are going**
- 95. Use Membership Management Software to automate your admin tasks and free up your time for member engagement and growth**
- 96. Track how new members join**  
That way, you can assess the effectiveness of your membership recruiting activities. Cut ineffective ways and pour more resources into the ones that actually work.
- 97. Create better benefits and resources**  
If you can be something that people cannot get anywhere else – and something that is really special – your membership will flourish.
- 98. Look into points of friction or contention for new members**  
Is it as easy as possible for new members to join? For example, if filling out a paper application and mailing it in is required, you might gain more members simply by shifting to online member application forms.

## Unconventional member recruitment ideas

- 99. Stop doing anything to get new members**  
Instead, focus efforts entirely on your existing members. Pour all your marketing resources into giving current members a better experience – and word of mouth will likely increase.