



Do you Believe in Magic?

**Oregon Association for Family and Community
Education**

Annual Conference Sept 29-Oct. 2, 2024

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Items for Preparation

- Leader Guide- familiarize yourself with the leader guide
- There is a lot of information in the leader guide, and it is not meant to be read word for word, use as a GUIDE for your presentation

Class needs:

- Pencils and paper for each member
- Copies of the handout(s) for each member
- PowerPoint- if you choose to use the PowerPoint you will need a projector, computer, screen, and power cords

Do you believe in MAGIC?

M=members

A=activities

G=good friends

I=interesting

C=creative

DISCUSSION: I am going to begin today by asking you some questions, you do not have to answer out loud. But please write your answers on the sheet I gave you.

ASK:

- 1. Why are you taking this class?**
- 2. Why is that important to you?**
- 3. What have you done in the past to increase membership?**
- 4. Why did you join FCE?**
- 5. What interested you in the organization?**

Research about member retention and engagement shows that for nonprofits and associations, member recruitment is about more than revenue. Losing members is hard on any organization. **Members are the lifeblood of our organization. They make magic happen!** Members are more than money in the coffers, members are the ideas, the excitement, the leadership encouragers, the upcoming leaders. They are the fuel that keeps our organization going!

Research shows that with ideal member retention sitting at 80% year over year, some membership loss is inevitable. That is why membership recruitment is so important—yet 68% of organizations face challenges in membership growth. That is more than two-thirds! I count Oregon FCE in that 68%!

It is all about **MARKETING** our organization!!!

Marketing is the molding of public opinion about a product, program, idea, activity, or a way of life. Great marketing produces demand and interest. You are marketing your FCE organization no matter what you do. Your FCE group either offers an open caring worthwhile educational program or a closed group just filling their time.

This molding of opinion happens at every FCE meeting and FCE sponsored community event. It even shows up in the talk around the family dinner table. The product FCE members “sell” is knowledge about homemaking, health, and living skills. The words we use to describe FCE, what we learn and do, are powerful. They paint pictures in others’ minds as they form opinions about our organization.

Lets go back to the questions I had you answer earlier.

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You were SOLD on a product!

Years ago, when our organization was a NEW product; 'so to speak,' it was fairly easy to get new members and build membership. We had a PRODUCT that the consumer, women like ourselves, wanted and needed. Plus, there was not much competition. The product we were selling then was EDUCATION! But it was education that was filling the needs of the rural women. How to preserve food, make clothing, soap, and mattresses. The needs were clearly defined!

During the 50's times started to change; farm families began to move to urban areas, FCE hit its high in membership in the 50's, then for the last 70+ years membership has seen a steady decline. When that decline started we needed to revisit the product we were selling, the customer we were selling to and the competition! Our customer changed, there is a diverse set of needs, and we need to start NOW to identify that what products are vying for the customers interest, and how we can focus on what

The world in which FCE must thrive is constantly changing. Countries change, values change, how we spend our time and what we think is important is constantly changing. In that context FCE must change!

The challenge facing FCE is not change but managing the change process. Change for the sake of change is rejected by most people. The challenge is to manage change in a way that meets the needs of the future while maintaining the fundamentals of our organization.

We need members who will

Stay focused on the needs of all the members

Create a vision of greatness and empower others to help achieve it

Discourage negativism and create a spirit of excitement for renewal

Locate and empower members who will be part of the solution

DISCUSSION:

Before we start recruiting, let us ask ourselves a few questions. What does the journey for new members for FCE look like now, and what should it look like going forward? In other words:

WHY would anyone want to join FCE?

WHAT do we have to offer members?

HOW will we retain new members once they join?

Here are three steps to think about when you are trying to get new members.

Step 1: Capture. Prospective members are “captured” when they are looped into our organization’s workings, be it by email, a newsletter, attending an event, or word of mouth.

Step 2: Nurture. After they attend, send follow-up emails, or phone calls nudging prospective new members along the path to signing up. **Make prospective members feel appreciated and valued with personalized attention, especially if they’ve shown interest in the organization! Then after they are members continue to make them, as well as current members, feel valued!**

Step 3: Conversion. Offer incentives to signing up, like membership benefits. You might also emphasize key aspects of the membership experience, like networking or community impact we have with our lessons and service projects. Emphasize that we are part of a National and an International organization.

Providing a smooth and personalized member experience is one of the most important tools we have—even at the recruitment stage. You want to make sure prospective new members are given every incentive to make it all the way through to the sign-up process and that they feel welcomed and comfortable in the group.

I know you are thinking “Why do we need to actively recruit new members?” We all want to believe our associations and organizations will naturally pull in the best people. But it’s simply not the case. In the same way that companies recruit new hires, member organizations also need to recruit members.

Recruiting new members proactively help you to:

- keep membership numbers up
- bring fresh perspectives and ideas to your group
- increase the quality of networking among members
- help prevent member burn out
- grow the reach of your association to new groups of people

ASK: What does recruitment mean to you?

Recruitment is about enrolling someone into your organization. But recruitment goes a bit further than that. Recruitment is about going out to potential members and being more involved in getting them to join. **Recruitment hints to a bit more effort, purpose and work done on your side to get new members.**

Having a website and just letting people find you really is not recruitment. The ideas we talk about today are about taking that extra step to pique people's interest in who you are and what you do.

General rules of member recruitment

Whatever you do to try to recruit new members into your organization, there are a couple of guidelines you should keep in mind.

1. Get your association in front of potential members

Step one in recruiting is to make sure potential members know who you are. The easiest way to do this is by being wherever your ideal members are. It could be about:

- Posting ads on social media channels
- Sponsoring events that they attend
- Being a guest on a podcast
- Paying for an ad on a website or in a magazine
- Putting up flyers or posters in physical areas
- Putting articles in community newsletters
- Attending community activities and sharing about FCE

Whatever events you hold or recruitment tactics you put in place, it will not work if they do not already recognize your organization or name. Remember, it takes on average 5 times for a person to really read a message, 10 to remember and 20 to act on it.

A bonus with our association is that our name indicates what we do and who our members are, so it is easier to feel a connection without too many touchpoints. But make sure that by the time you are running a recruitment event, your potential members know who you are.

2. Share member benefits and talk about what you do

No one likes to brag, but members join organizations for the benefits. Do not be shy to talk about and share ours. It's the main "why" for joining. When we say member benefits, it can be anything that we offer to our members. The more clearly potential members can see how joining will help and or benefit them, the more intrigued they will be to learn more.

Beyond this, sharing our member benefits helps to answer the question of how we are different from other organizations. Potential members may already be in an association, but it is possible that we have benefits that fit their needs a little better.

Potential members do not know what you do not tell them. So, get comfortable with what we do and why you joined and start sharing!

Let's talk about what FCE does that may be a little different from other organizations.

DISCUSSION: What are some things Oregon FCE has accomplished in the last few years? Help me make a list!

1. New members (7 in 2024 10 in 2023)
2. Started the High school essay contest and submitted to National
3. Informative newsletters
4. Oregon FCE ZOOM lessons continue
5. 4th Grade Essay and Artwork contest winners
6. 2nd and 3rd grade Essay and Artwork contest winners
7. Women Walk the World

Discussion: Now that we have a wonderful list of what Oregon FCE does let us talk about who to share that with. Do you share these accomplishments with those you are trying to recruit as a member of FCE? We need to know our product; we cannot suggest change for the future until we know what our present is.

Who could you target as a member? Make a list of those who may benefit from the things we do. Your natural potential membership is the community you live and work in every day.

These potential members are the people you serve, and serve with in other organizations, advocate for, and who directly benefit from your work. For instance, the families of the children who receive the knitted hats, or the people who work where the comfort bears are delivered. A senior group, a walking group, a craft group, a book club!

If you do not think you have a natural membership base, think about who your ideal member might be by asking yourself:

- Who might be interested in our work? Why would they want to join or why would they want to stay a member? What do we do that could draw people in?
- What lessons are we giving that are beneficial to others?
- What are their needs? What do we do that could meet their needs?

- How can or how do we add value to their lives?
- What are their demographics? ie age, locale, interests?
- WHO can add value to FCE?

There are six basic types of members, you are sure to know someone in one or more of these categories.

1. The **Need-to-Know** member- These are those in need of learning life skills to survive in a healthier safe environment.
2. The **Helping others/Society** member-These members want something more; they want to better the world for the family
3. The **Collaborative member**- This is the member that wants to join forces with others to secure success on common issues.
4. The **Support/Social** member- This may be a long-time member that can no longer take on a lot of responsibility, but wants the support and sociality of the group
5. **Global Interest** member- They may join specifically for what we do to have influence globally thorough ACWW.
6. **Other**- They may like to travel or be around others or have other reasons they would like to join.

DISCUSSION: Do you know anyone that fits in any of these categories? Have you asked them to join FCE?

Do we have a product to offer these members? YES!!! That is what FCE is all about! We already know people that fit in these categories. The problem most of us have is that we do not see ourselves as salespeople and recruiting membership is a selling or marketing job. It is difficult for most of us to sell anything. That is why it is extremely important for us to examine our own reasons for being a member of FCE, especially if we are serving in any type of leadership position. We need to know why we belong before we start selling our PRODUCT of FCE. The Product we 'sell' is the NEED of the customer!!! Turn back to the five questions I had you answer at the beginning of the class. Your answers to those are the basis of what you will say to others that will sell FCE.

Make your own list of potential members from people you know and associate with. They know you, talk with them about what service projects you have done in FCE; talk about a recent lesson or program with them; tell them how much you have grown and how you have improved your life through FCE

Do you believe in MAGIC?

How does MAGIC happen in FCE?

M=members- By Inviting new and retaining current members

A=activities- By having worthwhile and fun activities

G=good friends- Developing new and strengthening current friendships

I=interesting- By making our lessons/programs informative and interesting

C=creative- By being Creative in our meetings

My challenge to you is to recruit one new member to FCE. BUT you may need to talk to several people before you get that one! Do not be afraid to talk to them about FCE, what we do and who we are!

You can do it!! You have been a member for years, in some cases many years! Think about the highlights of your membership, how you have grown, how you have changed, how you have been strengthened by what you have learned. How your family has been impacted by the things you have learned and done.

We belong to an organization that has done so much good and helped so many, how can we not share the good???

Do you Believe in Magic? handout/worksheet

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Who do I know that could benefit from the things FCE does and or teaches?

Do you Believe in Magic? Information Sheet

Making friends as an adult can be challenging, and it is especially common for those over 40 to face unique obstacles in forming new connections.

Some reasons for this include:

1. Life transitions:

Many in this age group may be experiencing significant life changes, such as children leaving home, health issues, or career shifts, which can disrupt social networks.

2. Social circles:

Established friend groups may be busy with their own families and commitments, making it hard to find time to nurture new relationships.

3. Self-doubt:

Some in this age group may feel like they are too old to make new friends or worry that others will not be interested in befriending them.

However, there are many ways for people over 40 to form new connections and build strong friendships! Ideas include:

1. Join a club or group aligned with your interests (e.g., book club, hiking group, or volunteer work).

2. Attend events and gatherings specifically designed for those in this age group (e.g. conferences, workshops, or social meetups).

3. Take a class or workshop to learn a new skill or hobby (e.g., cooking, painting, or writing).

5. Be open and friendly in your daily life, striking up conversations with those you meet in your community or workplace.

Remember, forming new friendships takes time and effort, but it is never too late to start building meaningful connections with others