

Having problems recruiting members for the Chapter board? We asked chapter presidents how their chapters engage in activities to recruit new board members.

Typically, about this time of the year, we pass around a sign up sheet at a meeting for members to put their name and contact number if they would be willing to be involved with the local leadership, even if it is as a committee member. They can also write in the name of a fellow member they think would be good in a leadership role. That gives the nominating committee a starting point. Also this year I've been introducing a couple of board members each meeting and telling a little about them. Even though we know almost everybody at least from having seen them at meetings, we learn a little more about them. We found out one member is a Big Sister and volunteers for a cat rescue shelter. Another said she and her grand daughters like to play tricks on her son-in-law. I think that has helped to make the board seem more like everyone else. The last few meetings I've been listing a "top 10 reasons to be involved in local leadership" with thoughts from the leadership to encourage others to get excited and be willing to become involved. We'll find out in the next couple of months if that helped.

Pam Winter, Memphis Area Chapter

Each spring our nominating committee phones each member and asks them to consider running for office. When I was on nominating committee I also sent e-mails to the membership.

Heather Lee, New York State Southern Tier

We start recruiting many months in advance with chapter announcements at dinner meetings and emails. We use word of mouth which I think probably is the best. One fun thing we did was have "The Top 10 Reasons to Become a Board Member". We created a poster board and presented it at our chapter anniversary party. That was a lot of fun. Ultimately though, it is really hard.

Carina McCauley, Northern Vermont Chapter

Our chapter announces it at chapter meetings and our nominating person calls chapter members that have been suggested as possible candidates by other members.

Judith Nettleton, Greater Kalamazoo Chapter

Mention the open offices at our monthly educational programs. Have current board members share some specifics about their role on the board. Incentives to get people to join the board include sending the president-elect to Leadership Weekend and the president to Congress.

Anne Ireland, Northern Vermont Chapter

It is a struggle to get people to step up and accept a role on the board. We built our membership and then recruited from the new membership but we are now backing in the same situation this election year. It seems like the same people are volunteering. Please let me know what others are doing.

Jerrilyn Spiegl, Mid-Chesapeake Bay Chapter

Nominating Chair is the Immediate Past President. Networking at monthly programs, phone calls and e-mails, agenda item at quarterly business meetings, sharing from current officers regarding duties and time commitments. As an incentive the chapter pays national and local chapter dues for each officer

Ellen Woods, California Central Valley Chapter

Nominating Chair is appointed by the board. Recruitment is a concentrated effort at the end of the calendar year

Ellen Woods, California South Valley Chapter

We have found for presidents that we get a better response if we say there can be co-presidents. We try to get new members involved by having them shadow a person, like program, or a year then they take over solo the second year. Our chapter has a handful of seasoned members and a lot more newbie's but the newbie's, we are finding, just want to come to the meeting, get CEU, and a dinner and leave. No one wants to commit.

Karen Pribnow, Southeast Nebraska Chapter

How do we recruit members to run? First we ask for nominations from the membership then the nominating Chairperson verifies with those nominated that they are willing to run. If no nominations, or no one accepts, then the Nominating Chair will ask members personally, usually asking a member who has been with the organization a while or has served on the board in other positions. It is best to groom Board members to eventually run for Chapter President.

Mary Etta Hartwick, Carolina Blue Ridge Chapter

We announce open positions starting with our September meeting. We try to fine the positive rewards for being on the board such as earning continuing education points for OCN certification. We send our president to Congress and treat the board to a dinner gathering at the end of summer. We have some appointed chairs that are part of the board and long-standing members, who help provide guidance, history, experience and support. We have instituted co-chairs or tri chairs for positions like membership and programs so that people rotate off sequentially and as the newest chair, you have at least a year working with an experienced chair, so the positions are not as overwhelming. We adopted president-elects and ask for a three year commitment-- first year working with the president and gaining experience, next year as president and the third year as the outgoing president, still being there to help guide/support the board as necessary. The entire board works to identify members we think have the talent to fill the position.

Sandy Coila, Mt. Hood Chapter

Our chapter monitors chapter attendance; not formally, we just make a mental note of who attends regularly. Between January and October we discuss with our candidates the role of chapter leadership and the professional benefits. We also discuss the importance of the board, and how the board supports leadership.

Kathy Mastice, North Central New Jersey Chapter

We send two board members per year to Mentorship Weekend in Pittsburgh and we have been talking about giving free chapter membership to board members as well. Voting on this in November.

Lori Dyer, Lakes Region of Maine Chapter

We felt if they were mentored and transitioned into the position the member would not feel so overwhelmed. We also felt like we could then attempt to get existing chairs to possibly run for other offices such as secretary, treasurer, and president-elect. We also announce at meetings what positions are available, and have job descriptions for each position so they know what they are getting involved in. We also invite all of the membership to board meetings so they can see what happens.

Nancy Washburn, Greater Kansas City Chapter

Really, we get on the phone and keep asking. One initiative we are looking to do is to start contacting uninvolved members by phone or email and asking them to take their membership to another level. I remember a survey that was shared with chapter leaders at mentorship several years ago that stated that when uninvolved members were asked why they were not involved, they said because no one asked them to be involved. This is an easy fix.

Lisa Gaston, Chicago Chapter

In the past, we had a Volunteer Advisory Board where we could get volunteers together for special projects and also pair up members who are interested in further involvement with the various board members for shadowing and support. The Volunteer Advisory Board was good, and essentially functioned as a "farm team" for future board leaders. I've had one networking meeting for the members that are interested in more involvement and luckily we had Paula Rieger and Brian Theil. I certainly think that helped make it an amazing night.

Marie Seitz, Greater Los Angeles Chapter

We offer incentives to run for an office by paying national dues out of our treasury if the elected member attends 10 of the 12 meetings and three of the four planning meetings.

Pam Dunagin, Northwest Louisiana Chapter

We started a "board buddy" program in the Chicago Chapter when I was President of our chapter last year. I and one other board member invited two nurses to be part of our board meetings and offer suggestions, etc. This gave them the opportunity to be part of the board without the commitment. It gave us the opportunity to hear what the younger nurses were thinking and use their suggestions to bring in new members and ideas. I must say it was a frightening thing for me to sit around the board when I first got involved. I had a mentor, but even so, I didn't feel all that comfortable speaking up. By doing our board buddy, we have one currently running for an office. I do not believe she would have otherwise gotten involved!

Paula Franson, Chicago Chapter

What's the best way to recruit members for the chapter Board? Ask! That's the strategy that we've found to be most effective. Sometimes people aren't willing to step forward on their own....but if we (members of the Board, Nominating Chair, etc.) just ask them, they are willing to consider it.

Mary Schueller, Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

Our chapter has the Immediate Past President be Chair of Nominating Comm for full year afterwards; she knows membership pretty good; she starts to talk to members right away to identify who would agree to running for next officers; we always have trouble getting running

mates; but eventually someone will step up. I think we need to offer more perks to the worker bees; this year six of the board members are attending IOL on a partial chapter scholarship so I feel we have awarded the working officers/committee chairs pretty well. It's also tradition that the chapter provides a meal (not fancy) for every board meeting) On a different but similar note, I'd like to see ONS award a token of appreciation to the members of chapters who step up and volunteer at Congress or IOL or who become awards applications reviewers; thank you's and appreciation measures are always nice !!

Ann Smith, East Central Florida Chapter

In the fall we send out a ballot "nomination sheet" to our entire constituency for the positions that are open for the following year (along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope). Once we get the nominations back the board then reviews them. If everything is okay with each nominee we send out another ballot for voting with the position and the nominees, along with another stamped envelope. There have been occasions when we had some difficulty finding people agreeable to run for certain positions, so board members would make some phone calls once certain people were identified that might be good potential board members. But that's not happened that often.

Margaret Rhoads, Dallas Chapter

Next year we are going to be highlighting each of the positions to be filled for the year at different membership meetings. I would also like to use the round table format used during Mentorship Weekend, having the current board members talk directly with the members about their position. I also hope to have a very positive and upbeat nominating chair next year that can sell it because she supports it. I truly believe that is one of the biggest factors in recruiting.

Elisabeth Yogerst, Northeastern Wisconsin Chapter

At each meeting we discuss the nominating topic and the importance of membership involvement to the over all success of the chapter and that there is room for everyone. We personally approach members about positions and encourage them to ask questions. Our chapter developed a booklet three years ago listing the board positions and their responsibilities. This is made available at each meeting for all members to view. Our membership team is dedicated to promoting an inviting and friendly atmosphere at our meetings. This year we celebrated 15 years and recognized our past presidents. Above all, we made sure our members understood they would be mentored into their new position and they would always have a resource person to assist them. We were able to bring in five new board member nominees for the upcoming 2011 year.

Mary Damhauser, Northern Fox Valley Chapter

I find members love to come to meetings, we always have dinner meetings but often are not willing to have any deeper involvement than that. I network a lot, I constantly cajole members into running. I start early and plant the seeds that I am hoping they will step up to the plate. I discuss with the Board whom they think would be willing to run and then I contact them personally by phone or e-mail. I put nomination forms out on the tables at our Chapter meetings asking for names, collect and then contact again. I always tell members it is fun to be involved, and that being on the Board looks really good on your annual evaluation. I approach members in person and ask them to consider running. Sometimes I find that people are really flattered to be

asked and are delighted then to do it. Most of all I tell them I will support them in their role whether I am on the Board or not. I will continue to help with projects. I have managed to get two candidates for each position except for this year when I got just one for Program Chair.

Joan Cahill-Billings, North Carolina Triangle Chapter

Last year our president, wrote personal notes to a few members who regularly attended the meetings and always seemed to be engaged. She invited them to become more active and to consider attending a board meeting. One young member did and enjoyed the meetings enough to run for secretary. She ran unopposed and served as secretary.

Christine Althoff, Northern Virginia Chapter

We have tried various methods to entice our membership to apply for an executive board position. Some ideas for recruitment have been: early mentoring, table cards featuring an executive board member and their position on the board, PowerPoint presentations on each board position, and small separate executive board meetings.

Jennifer Giannini, Greater Los Angeles Chapter

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Joan Cahill, North Carolina Triangle Chapter