

▣ Dated: Thu Mar 13, 2008 3:05 pm
 Subject: TIP TRAIN: RECRUITING MEMBERS

The question (sent on March 7, 2008):

We need your help. We currently have 44 members who bought a start-up kit but haven't started a Time Bank. We have others who have gotten started, but still only have a handful of members! They need some good hints on how to recruit new members. Please share with us 2-5 sentences on what have been your best ideas for recruiting members?

Responses to the e-mail query are re-posted below with permission.
 Please add your own ideas!

Last edited by Jen Moore on Thu Mar 13, 2008 3:08 pm; edited 2 times in total

From PDX Time Bank (OR)

"One was a news article relating the start up of the Time Bank. We then had our first intro session that gathered about 20 people. We then got a sponsorship to distribute fliers, get the membership kit and do an Earth Day event. We then built our own information website. The membership has now grown to about 35. We gained a partnership with a local food coop and are starting to make the rounds at other associations, churches etc."

From the Burlington Time Bank (VT)

"A group of like-minded individuals got together, started the project and then launched with a potluck. [In] the last six months we really haven't actively recruited anyone, with the result being we have 126 members with over forty who are waiting to be activated! We do hang up fliers around town in coffee shops and in Laundromats. We are also working on a PSA to air on the public station in town (they are required to air PSAs to stay on the air)."

From Columbia Community Exchange (MD)

"The first few members of our Time Banking program were US (Time Banking and other interested staff members). Our first B-I-G activity was an Open House. It was well publicized and we invited everybody - politicians, ministers, all churches and denominations, all schools, all self-help agencies/businesses/companies in Columbia, Edgar Cahn. Other strategies that have produced positive results:

- We created a simple web page (It's being revised by our Marketing and Communications Department)
- We will be Narrowcasting soon
- Media
- Articles in the major news papers, e.g., Baltimore Sun, Washington Post
- Articles in the local newspapers and periodicals
- We created seasonal festivals - Summer Festival, Fall Festival, Spring Festival, Winter Festival (Invited everyone again via distributed fliers)
- Took copious quantities of brochures to all libraries, all churches, gyms, hospitals,

health department, social services (recipients might as well read a Time Banking brochure while waiting), dental offices, doctor's offices, any and all public places that would receive them - we replenish periodically and use that opportunity to discuss Time Banking with whomever will listen. We usually get 2 or 3 interested people that way and as far as I'm concerned, everything counts!

- We had two cable tv interviews
- We had two radio interviews
- Regularly scheduled trainings/orientations that are highlighted in conversation, interviews, articles, etc. tend to keep people interested.
- Retaining a list of everyone with whom we have ever discussed time banking and reminding them prior to each scheduled orientation/training tends to work well. **THE PERSONAL TOUCH IS CRUCIAL AND WORKS WELL EVERYTIME.**
- We also encourage our members to recruit others and about 15 - 35 have joined us through that method.
- We placed brochures at the Comedy Club next door to our building which resulted in three comedians joining our Time Bank. We will commemorate our First Anniversary with a comedy show (Many of the jokes, etc. will be Time Banking oriented, which should generate interest among those that are not yet members). Admission will cost Time Banking members one time dollar. Everyone else will pay whatever the club charges (\$5 or \$10), but I'll be there taking names and contact information and distributing info about Time Banking/business cards, expecting that this will be a great recruitment tool as well. We'll see.
- One of our members is a web master by profession and he conducts web classes. We publicize this through the local newspapers and periodicals. When non-members call to inquire (we publicize well before our regular training dates) we refer them to our training/orientation, as our classes are for members only!! In this way, we recruit new members and fill the classes as well. Other members have agreed to conduct various classes as well, e.g., Thai cooking, Bonsai plant care, furniture painting, Hula Hooping, etc.”

From Lynn Time Bank (MA)

“My observation is that the single greatest asset in starting our Time Bank was that the decision was made by a group of people who wanted to participate! They loved the idea of cash-free service exchanges and were ready to give and receive hours of help among each other at the same time as reaching out to others. Members also invited their friends to join the time bank after they had a positive experience. The Lynn Time Bank Board of Directors has been tremendously helpful in reaching out to their networks of contacts and setting up meetings where I am the invited guest speaker. In our case, having a full-time Director and multi-lingual staff/interns has also been relevant and appropriate for membership growth. In my experience, giving presentations to invite people to join a Time Bank is like planting seeds: some people will catch the vision right away and will sign up quickly, others need time to think about it or to hear more than one presentation before they get involved even if they do see Time Banking as a good idea right away.”

From Houston Hope (TX)

“In the community that I work in, there is a great need for basic necessities. So in order to

reach many of members, we began attending churches, community “hotspots”, and food pantries, and talked individually with people about the benefits of Time Banking. We also held community meetings, where we did time bank presentations catered to spark the interest of the residents.”

From Woodstock TimeBank (NY)

“The Woodstock TimeBank has had very consistent results from two hour MEET & GREETs at a local coffee house. We are there on a regular schedule twice a month. We advertise these events in the local paper and through our members. People show up looking for us, members love to drop by and schmooze and frequently end up helping talk to prospective members, thus increasing their own skills. We also end up attracting other folks who have just stopped by for a latte. We get about 6-8 members each time. (We are a town of about 3500 people).

The other successful strategy has been through recruiting organizations. This was slow at first, but now they are coming to us and their members follow. We have changed over to a system where we give each person and 1-on-1 orientation so that they really know the software. Participation has more than doubled since we made this change.”

From Neighbor-to-Neighbor Exchange (WV)

“I give presentations to various churches and civic organizations I have a power point presentation that I use. It has been successful. I corner individuals I know and bring up the subject. We now have 256 members and growing lots of 1 to many exchanges and the 1:1 exchanges are slowly growing. Getting people to document their hours is tough but we are slowly crossing that bridge.”

From Lathrup Village Time Bank (MI)

“As a former community/political organizer I'm a person who LOVES going door to door. That's what I did to get initial interest up. ... When I had about 5-10 people who had the idea I asked for time at our Homeowners Association Pancake Breakfast held in early January. I had sign up sheets ready for each table and brochures w/my name, phone and email on them. I spent 5 minutes talking about it at the Pancake Breakfast and of about 65 people, 22 of them signed up with some level of interest. ... I followed up w/calls and emails to those people within 2 days after the Pancake Breakfast. We had a potluck at my house w/15 people the following Sunday. At that first potluck I had a coordinator from the Woodstock Time Bank on the phone. ... She created credibility, answered questions and showed everyone that it was possible to do.

After that meeting we decided to do another organizing meeting and agreed that everyone would take brochures and talk with 5 other people. I agreed to go to City Council and tell them what we were doing, [where I] was approached by two writers from different local papers who then [wrote articles]. City Council meetings are broadcast on the local cable channel 3x, so the word should be getting out to some people via that route.

The paper articles came out 2 weeks later and I had a few calls. From there I continue to go door to door to a few houses, we've had 2 organizing meetings where we agreed to learn the software, get our offers/requests on line and start exchanges among the 30 of us

who have attended meetings. ...

I made copies of the newspaper articles, took them to the organizing meetings and have passed them out on the doors in addition to the brochure.

There are other groups in the city that members have agreed to talk with--the garden club, seniors, marketing club and supper club. Word has spread there and excitement is growing.

Getting people to use the software and starting to share immediately is key. If you wait (until you get 60 people) it takes too long and the momentum dies out. We are continuing to build momentum at this point and people are getting the "bug" so to speak."

From Time Bank of the Mahoning Valley (OH)

"For our first meeting I invited close to fifty individuals. They were friends and acquaintances of both my wife and myself. Only eight individuals attended. I asked these eight to act as ambassadors and to think of themselves as a kitchen cabinet. I requested them to provide suggestions to other groups, individuals and meeting locations. As coordinator, I follow up their leads and use the TimeBanks USA video and a power point presentation as a introduction to any group that will host a gathering for the presentation.

In two months we now have 21 members, most new members come from referrals from a current member and the rest from a presentations."

From Dane County TimeBank (WI)

"We partnered with some existing organizations who have lots of ties in their area. I can't stress enough - partnering with community organizations is helpful in tons of ways, including getting funding, creating exchange opportunities that are easy for members to plug into (a major deal for lots of Time Banks), and getting the word out to their own members. So we had partners pitching Time Banking at lots of neighborhood meetings, writing about it for neighborhood papers, etc. And we held several events where we served a FREE DINNER which attracted lots of folks who were willing to learn more. Every event we did (and still do - we have monthly events) we had a matching game where attendees talk about what they need and want and everyone in the room who's capable of filling that need raises their hand. It shows people how, even in a small group, there are almost always matches to be made."

From SkillShare (CO)

"People find us on the Internet, go to our website and contact us to check us out and some of those join. Others learn about us by word of mouth. Last summer we had a table at the local Farmer's Market once a month but got NO new members from this effort. However, we think this is a good way to expand our presence in Boulder, so we will be there twice a month in 08. At our 5 year anniversary in January 08, we got some radio and newspaper publicity that generated about 5 prospects."

From Visiting Nurse Service New York

“It's really a long conversation but basically we're rolling it out through partners in the communities, mostly not-for-profit CBOs.... We present to the staff at the CBOs, get them on board as partners to the TimeBank and then schedule presentations/orientations at existing meetings. Each of the members can also be encouraged and incentivized to bring along a friend, family member, neighbor.”