

Membership Recruitment Toolkit

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Back to Basics Tips

A thriving membership is crucial to the future of Soroptimist and ensuring the future of our global community that invests in the dreams of women and girls. While there will always be new technology and ideas to embrace, some fundamentals for providing a warm, welcoming, and meaningful membership experience will always endure, so let's go back to basics!

Follow-Up and Follow Through

Is your club prepared to provide information to prospective members, invite them to participate in your club's projects, and welcome those who want to join? How do you feel when you need important information and someone says, "I'll get back to you on that," and you don't hear from them for weeks, or months, or worse—they never get back to you at all?

It doesn't feel good and this type of lackluster experience is one that you will likely mention to your friends and relatives, tell your co-workers about the next day, and even share on social media for the world to see.

You can never make a second first impression: that's why it's so important to make sure you are following up *and* following through with potential members for your recruitment efforts to be a success. When someone expresses interest in joining or helping in some way, we've got their attention and this is the time to strike!

What can you do?

Make sure that you have access to your club's soroptimist.net email address: When a prospect reaches out to SIAHQ, we send these contact forms and introduce the new member to your club via your official email address (the current president and/or membership chair listed on the roster will be blind copied as well). Be sure to check this email address often and respond quickly!

Engage them immediately: One of the best things a club can do to immediately engage someone is to invite them to help out with a project or attend an event.

Obtain contact information and ask questions: Gather as much information as you can including name, address, phone number(s), and email. Ask how they heard about Soroptimist, why are they interested in joining the club, and what issues they are passionate about.

Direct them to SIA's website: At www.soroptimist.org you'll find useful links for potential members, such as Who We Are, Our Programs, LiveYourDream.org, and Soroptimist 101.

Send prospects to SIA's social media sites: For all the latest Soroptimist news and conversation, prospective members and volunteers can check out our **Facebook, Bluesky, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube** sites.

Respond in a timely manner: Don't miss the opportunity to engage a potential member or volunteer who is interested in joining your club NOW. Follow-up with emails and phone calls as soon as possible, and create a warm, welcoming experience by being friendly and prompt.

New members mean new ideas and new energy. It is critical to the long-term success of our organization--and the women and girls we serve—that we do our part to attract, engage, and retain new members.

Dues & Fees

Let's face it: talking about money can be awkward! But it's essential to be upfront, clear, and sensitive about the financial commitments that are part of membership when recruiting, and to explain how dues and fees support the work we do to invest in the dreams of women and girls. A great way your club can prepare for these conversations is to develop flexible policies and safety nets for new recruits or long-standing members who may run into financial difficulty.

Don't shy away from the topic – have a conversation about dues and other responsibilities during your first meeting with a prospective member. By describing your club's programs and the various support provided by the region and federation levels first, you'll lay the groundwork for an outline of the financial obligations to your club, where the money goes, and how it helps us carry out our mission.

Allow members to make payments in installments if needed. This can benefit members of all ages: younger members who may have lower financial capacity early in their career and older members who are on fixed income. Providing this flexibility can make membership more accessible. Set up a payment plan with clear-cut payment dates over the course of several weeks and welcome them fully into the club's activities from the very start.

Set up a "finance support" fund in your club budget. This could be funded by calling for donations from members for this purpose, or by charging a dollar or two in each member's dues to be allocated to the fund each year. This fund could be used to pay partial or full dues for a member who may have financial hardship but is committed to the mission and will be a great addition to (or continued presence in) the club.

Capitalize on pro-rated dues: new members joining after January 1 are billed half the annual SIA Dues rate! If your club has been engaging community members and volunteers throughout the first half of the club year, and they have not yet become full-fledged members, the beginning of the new calendar year is the ideal time to make your case and bring them into club membership. Over the next few months, they will have positive membership experiences, see our mission at work first-hand, and be excited to renew when the new club year begins.

Providing a Welcoming Experience

When a prospective member visits your club, or when a club member brings along a friend or family member to a meeting, does that guest walk away feeling welcomed, valued, and excited to come back? By taking a few extra actions to demonstrate enthusiastic hospitality, your club can really “WOW” visitors. That feeling will bring them back to participate in club fundraisers, mission-based projects, and can be the first step to member recruitment.

Offer transportation: Even if the prospective member could drive herself to the meeting, it’s still a great gesture for a club member to offer her a ride. Most importantly, providing a way to get there means the prospect doesn’t have to enter the meeting by herself – she’s already made a connection with a member before she walks in the door. Alternatively, you can also provide directions and/or offer to meet her outside when she arrives.

Wear name tags: Keep blank name tags on hand for visitors and ensure members regularly wear their name tags. This makes conversation and connection easier for a guest, who may be overwhelmed by the number of new faces and names!

Create a hospitality committee: Make sure that at each meeting, specific members are assigned to welcome visitors. Their job is to help prospects find seats, sit with them, and introduce them to other members to ensure they’re engaged right away.

Provide background information: Keep packets on hand with basic information about SIA, our Dream Programs, and our organizational structure and provide these to guests.

Follow up: Have a member call the visitor a week later to express gratitude and share what other meetings or club activities are coming up. This shows a prospective member that you really enjoyed her company and want her to come back. While you have her on the phone, this might be the right moment to ask her if she would like to join the club! You can tell her about the process for becoming a member of your club and answer any questions she may have.

Engaging Prospects in SIA’s Mission

We know that prospective members are attracted to SIA’s mission of providing women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment, specifically those facing significant obstacles. When recruiting members to your club, it is important to put our mission and Dream Programs front and center. This ensures we deliver on our brand by offering them the opportunity to invest in their dreams right away!

Here are a few ideas you could use to engage prospective members in our Dream Programs.

Live Your Dream Awards

Invite your club's list of potential members to participate in the judging process for your club-level Live Your Dream Award. This will allow them to learn about the stories of the women we serve through this award program – but be sure to review confidentiality procedures and have them [sign a confidentiality form](#) first!

Have them support a Live Your Dream Award applicant workshop by helping with basic tech issues or preparing refreshments. This will also help them learn more about the program.

Invite anyone who may be interested in membership to your event to honor Live Your Dream Award recipients. This is an opportunity to meet face-to-face with the amazing women who receive the Awards.

Encourage prospects to help support past recipients, whether your club distributes holiday gifts, provides school supplies, or provides random encouragement calls throughout the year.

Dream It, Be It

Before your Dream It, Be It project, gather current and potential members to prepare materials packets or tote bags of supplies to be distributed to the girls participating in the program.

After your Dream It, Be It project, engage prospects to assist in reviewing the girls' evaluations and planning for next year. This is a great opportunity for them to read the inspirational comments your girl participants write about their experience.

Big Goal Accelerator Projects

Encourage prospects to attend an event where your club assembles period kits for a local school, shelter, or other facility. This is a hands-on way for them to contribute and get to know Soroptimist members while seeing how they can help in the future if they become a member.

Club Culture

In addition to being warm and welcoming to new folks, we must make sure our club cultures are supportive of retaining members as well. A healthy club environment is inviting to prospects and retains existing members!

No guilt: Does your club accommodate members' schedules, or is there a culture of "guilt" directed at those who can't attend meetings as often as others? It's important to offer members and prospects flexibility about their participation in meetings and activities—especially if you're recruiting members who may be balancing working, caregiving, health issues, and other responsibilities in addition to Soroptimist.

Accept that members will have varied capacity and appreciate that each member gives what they can! Be clear about expectations and find ways to be flexible in how members meet them: offer virtual and/or hybrid meetings, provide members with carpooling if they don't want to drive at night, and offer ways to support

events without attending every meeting (i.e., can a member support a fundraiser by calling local businesses for donations or sponsorships without attending every committee meeting in-person?).

Listen and take ideas seriously: New members mean new ideas and new energy. It is critical to the long-term success of our organization—and the women and girls we serve—that we do our part to attract, engage, and retain new members. Part of that also means that your club needs to be genuinely welcoming of new ideas from members—it is extremely disheartening for someone to be excited about something and how it can help make a positive impact just to be told “no, we don’t do that here.” If there is a reason that their idea won’t work, it’s fine to explain why gently, but there is no need to be harsh.

Don’t push them into leadership too fast: Some clubs are so excited to have new members, that within just a few months they are pushing them into leadership roles. While some new members may be excited for the responsibilities, others may feel overwhelmed or unsupported. Encourage newer members to get involved on committees, share knowledge freely to support them, and provide any documentation you can to support them when it’s time to pass on leadership roles.

General Recruitment Tips

Mission-Focused Members

Our surveys indicate that the top reason new members join our organization is because of our mission and Dream Programs. You can help grow your club’s membership by recruiting members who reflect their communities and are invested in our mission.

But where do you find these mission-motivated members?

Consider any organization that your club might partner with, such as:

- Colleges, including targeting older students and staff
- Workplaces, especially nonprofits that you partner with
- Women’s professional networks and events
- Community fairs or volunteer fairs

These are people who already know a little about Soroptimist and likely care about our mission—they just might not know how to get involved!

Member-Get-A-Member

Who is a better spokesperson for Soroptimist than a current member sharing what membership means to them?

Your own friends, family, and network are a great source of potential new members—AKA, “member-get-a-member.” They may already be familiar with Soroptimist because they’ve heard you talk about your amazing volunteer experiences and how much your club accomplishes in your community. That goes a lot further to paint a picture of what being a Soroptimist might mean compared to just seeing a flyer in the grocery store. You can also share on social media about why you’re a Soroptimist and encourage anyone who is interested to reach out to you (check out later in this toolkit for a template!).

Consider offering a fun benefit to members who bring their friends and family into membership. Maybe it’s a sash that they get to wear at a meeting for being a “recruitment rockstar” or a small gift card for coffee at a local spot.

Encourage former members to reinstate

Former Soroptimists are great prospects because they are already connected to our mission and programs. Reach out to former members and work with them and your club leadership to address their concerns while encouraging them to rejoin (or help them remain in the club!).

Public Awareness is Key!

Every time someone sees your club in your community, reads one of your posts or hears about your impact, you are creating an opportunity for a future member to discover Soroptimist.

Strong brand recognition lays the foundation for successful recruitment efforts. Your club should be well-known for the access to education that you provide to improve the lives of women and girls.

Be a Walking Ambassador

- Wear your Soroptimist swag while you’re out and about! This can be a fun conversation starter with people you encounter while running errands or engaging in small talk.
- Represent Soroptimist well while you wear our logo!

Help Potential Members See Themselves in Soroptimist

- Ensure all communication—whether on social media, in newsletters, or on your website—is inclusive and representative of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.
- Use language that speaks to a broad audience and makes everyone feel welcome.
- Help potential members connect to our mission and imagine themselves as part of your club.

Share Your Stories of Impact

- Create engaging content on social media to share stories, testimonials, and behind-the-scenes content.
- Share videos of members discussing their experiences and Soroptimist’s impact on their lives.
- Share success stories from the Dream Programs to demonstrate your club’s tangible impact on the lives of women and girls.

- Include statistics, such as:
 - The number of women and girls your club has reached
 - The amount of money your club has awarded
 - The number of local projects your club has completed
- Give every communication has a clear and actionable next step, whether joining, attending an event, or signing up for a newsletter.

Meet People Where They Are

Consider where people in your community already gather and look for opportunities to share information about Soroptimist. Possible locations include:

- Yoga studios
- Wineries
- Senior centers and retirement communities
- Bookstores
- Houses of worship
- Libraries
- Doctors' offices, etc.

This is a good way to recruit interested members across the age spectrum!

Make the Most of Digital Platforms

- Use digital platforms to share information about your impact and recruit potential members.
- Make sure someone comfortable using each platform is responsible for posting regularly and responding to messages.
- Check accounts consistently. If someone messages your club's Instagram account to express interest in membership but no one responds, it does not create a good first impression.

Use Ready-to-Customize Resources

While we all have access to the Soroptimist logos to download and use homemade printed materials, not every club has a graphic designer in their membership to ensure that every flyer and brochure looks sleek, professional, and enticing. Luckily, SIA Headquarters provides professionally designed resources that clubs can easily customize. , Your club can access a wide variety of [high-quality publicity materials](#) that are simple to download, add your club's information and print locally.

- Use the [customizable club logo](#) to pair your club's name with the official Soroptimist logo and create a consistent, recognizable identity.
- Customize SIA's [Canva templates](#) with your club's information for social media posts, flyers and other promotional materials.
- Follow Soroptimist's [brand and style guidelines](#) when creating your own materials.

Inducting New Members

Sample Induction Script

Welcoming new members should be fun and inspirational! New members should be introduced at the beginning of their first meeting. This introduction can be as simple as preparing a brief but meaningful welcome message and presenting the new member with a member pin and name badge. You can pre-order these to have on hand. Pins and badges are available for sale in the [Soroptimist Store](#).

Following is sample language that clubs can adapt and customize for inducting new members:

The members of Soroptimist International of [club name] are honored to have you join us. It is our privilege to welcome you to a worldwide organization of members who are providing women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment, specifically those facing significant obstacles.

Our name Soroptimist is a coined Latin word meaning “best for women,” and that’s what our club strives to achieve. We believe in dreams and the collective power of working together to achieve them and to advance the economic empowerment of women and girls.

Soroptimist membership celebrates the unique power of women and girls. We look forward to helping you explore the gift of membership as you participate in club projects and activities that advance our mission.

As a token of your new membership, we present to you this Soroptimist pin. The pin represents your commitment to our mission and to empowering women and girls to live their dreams by giving them the resources to create positive change for themselves, their families, their communities, and the world.

Other Tips

More tips to make new members feel welcome:

- In addition to a pin and name badge, give new members a small gift bag at their first meeting.
- Hold a dinner at which new members are the guests of honor and the focus is getting to know each other – not club business.
- Provide an orientation! Doing so can inspire new members to become active, long-term members. They provide the opportunity for members to become acclimated and ensure a smooth transition into the club’s culture. Additionally, an orientation gives a new member a better picture of your club and how they can fit in and find value in their membership.

- Encourage new members to attend SIA's virtual new member orientations as well to help them understand the broader organization.
- Include a profile, photo, and contact information for each new member in the club newsletter (with their permission/media release).
- Do an icebreaker at the beginning of any meeting attended by new members that introduces them in a fun and memorable way while encouraging current members to break out of their standard group. This may seem like overkill to current members, but the more club members know each other, the more likely they will be comfortable being honest with and supportive of each other.
- If there is a large group of new members joining the club, consider doing a speed networking event where members sit with each other for five minutes to share information about themselves. The structure of speed networking provides a more comfortable environment for introverted members and allows members to keep moving so they're not in one place for too long.
- Designate a current member or members to greet attendees at the door and to direct new members to the appropriate area so they immediately feel included.
- Use seating arrangements that encourage current members to sit next to new members.
- Send a press release to local media about new members and share it on social media (with media release forms and for members who are comfortable only).

The most important thing to remember when welcoming new members is to be creative! How a member is welcomed is entirely at the club's discretion. Whether it is a formal dinner or a humorous icebreaker, make the welcome unique to your club and memorable for both new and current members.

Sample Outreach Templates

Please use these resources in your club as you connect with prospective members who are interested in joining Soroptimist and customize these templates as desired. Please note the **yellow highlighted areas** in each template where you should fill in specific information related to your club or the individual you are in contact with.

Sample Social Media Post Template

Because social media can be so personal, please just use the below as a template—make sure it sounds like you and your voice! And it can't hurt to include a selfie of you wearing your Soroptimist pins/tee-shirt on!

You may have seen me promoting my Soroptimist International of <<Club Name>> fundraisers or encouraging donating items for our Dream Programs participants. But have you ever considered joining me in our mission to invest in the dreams of women and girls? If you're interested, I'd love to tell you more!

Sample Email for People You Know Template

Consider sending an email like this to friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc. Customize to your heart's content!

Subject: Want to make a difference?

Dear <<Prospect's First Name>>,

As you may know, I've been a member of Soroptimist International of <<Club Name>> since <<insert membership length>>. I'd love to share a little bit of information with you about my club. *(Share some details about recent club events and Dream Programs work)*. I joined Soroptimist because *(share some details about why you joined and how the club provides that)*.

We'd love to have you join us at an upcoming *(meeting/event)*. *(Share details about an upcoming event)*

Please let me know if you can make it to the event, and do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions—happy to chat. I'd love to see a familiar face there!

Sincerely,

<<Name>>

Templates for Responding to Join Us Forms from SIA Website

When an interested potential member submits an [introduction form](#) on SIA's website, they include their location and reasons they may be interested in joining. The introduction form is then forwarded to the club's "@soroptimist.net" email address by SIA membership staff, blind copying the club president and/or the club membership chair's email. The club president may wish to conduct this outreach herself or forward the introduction form to the club's membership chair or committee for their follow-up if they're not copied.

Sample Email Template: For connecting as soon as possible after receiving introduction form

Subject: Thank you for your interest!

Dear <<Prospect's First Name>>,

We received your introduction form and we are thrilled that you are interested in learning more about our Soroptimist club!

I'd love to share a little bit of information with you about our club, SI/ <<Club Name>>. *(Share some details about recent club events and Dream Programs work).*

We'd love to have you join us at an upcoming *(meeting/event)*. *(Share details about an upcoming event)*

Please let me know if you can make it to the event, and do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Thanks again for your interest! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

<<Name>> <<Office>>

Sample Phone Script: For outreach one week after replying to introduction form, if no response

Hello, may I please speak to <<Prospect's First Name>>?

I'm <<Caller's Name>> calling from SI/ <<Club's Name>>. How are you?

I am calling to follow up because we recently received an introduction form from you indicating your interest in joining our club. I sent you an email last week and I wondered if you had any questions or if I could share some more information about our club. We would love to have you join us!

(Discuss any concerns or questions that the prospect may have about your club)

→ *If the discussion results in an understanding that the prospect is interested in membership and would like to attend an upcoming event:*

It has been great catching up with you today, <<Prospect's First Name>>! I am looking forward to meeting you in person on <<Date>> at the next <<Club Meeting, Event>>. If you have any questions before then, don't hesitate to reach out to me.

→ *If the discussion results in an understanding that the prospect is not interested in membership and is seeking assistance from the club:*

It has been great talking with you today. Although membership may not be what you're looking for, I think that you may be interested in applying for our Live Your Dream Award *(or share information about another club program, if relevant)*. Is it OK with you if I share your information with our club's program chair so that she may provide more information about this program?

→ *If the discussion results in an understanding that the prospect is not interested in membership or relevant Soroptimist programs:*

It has been great talking with you today, and I'm glad we were able to connect so that I could share more information about our club and what we're doing in our community.

Sample Email Template: For outreach two months after receiving introduction form (if no contact was made/prospect still unsure)

SUBJECT: Soroptimist Membership

Dear <<Prospect's First Name>>,

I am reaching out again because in recent months, you submitted an introduction form indicating your interest in club membership with SI/<<Club Name>>.

I sent you an email at the time and wanted to follow up to find out if you may still be interested in learning more about our club.

We have an upcoming event that you may be interested in. *(Share event details)* Please let me know if you may be able to attend so we can meet in person and you can see our work firsthand. We would love to have you!

Sincerely,

<<Name>> <<Office>>