Meeting the Needs of Communities through Volunteer Service

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT
The value of Sertoma is personified through our ability to respond to the needs of today while planning for the future. For all of our organizational structures, past, present, and future, one thing is constant: a collection of people, acting as one can create change for the betterment of all.

The club goal should be to carry out Sertoma’s hearing health mission, while making membership valuable and convenient. Recruiting new members who will sustain our clubs as well as lead them through our 2nd century of service is often a huge challenge for today's Sertoma clubs. This manual is designed to assist clubs through the recruitment process, sharing tips and resources that can be used to develop a plan that meets the needs of your club.
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Before marketing the club to potential new members, it is important to gauge the club's attractiveness to current and prospective members. Think about your club for a few minutes. Do you recognize any of the following?

- Your club is experiencing a decrease in member involvement.
- Club meetings have become routine.
- Your club is locked in tradition and unwilling to change.
- You are finding it harder to attract and keep new members.
- There is a genuine desire to bring in new members.
- Club procedures make it difficult to bring in new members.
- The same few members are doing all the work.

If your club is experiencing any of the above, it is time to step back and identify areas that could use a new approach. The Club Assessment Survey can provide invaluable insights into a club's health by identifying strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

When using the Club Assessment Survey, clubs are encouraged to modify, add and delete questions based on specific areas of concern. It is important that clubs not shy away from addressing club traditions, such as outdated programs that no longer meet the needs of the members or the community. Include all members in the survey, mailing or emailing the survey, if necessary. Encourage members to suggest new ideas or strategies. Ensure them that all information is confidential.

The results of the Club Assessment Survey can help clubs determine what has kept them from reaching their goals and what must be done to overcome these obstacles. For example, if an assessment reveals that the majority of club members feel the club’s projects do not promote Sertoma’s hearing health mission, the club should consider revamping current programs or trying new ones.

An annual assessment gives clubs a framework, within which members can create a plan for positive change, including membership recruitment. By continually evaluating and adapting projects and practices, a club will maintain the interest of current members and attract new ones.
After clarifying the club's mission and identifying strengths and weaknesses through the Club Assessment Survey, you are ready to develop the message to prospective members.

The club's recruitment message does not have to be a written script. A more effective tool is a list of informal talking points that all members can refer to when speaking about Sertoma. The list below provides a basis for developing talking points for your club. Clubs should customize their list to include local activities and benefits specific to the club. Members can complement the list by describing personal experiences.

**SERTOMA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

- **Fulfillment:** Work on projects that improve the lives of others and foster personal satisfaction and recognition.
- **Fellowship:** Cultivate relationships with other Sertomans who have similar interests and values.
- **Diversity:** Meet fellow Sertomans from different backgrounds as you participate in projects that address Sertoma's national hearing health mission.
- **Leadership:** Develop skills at the club level that enhance leadership opportunities at all levels of the organization as well as professional capabilities.
- **Mentoring:** Reach out to fellow Sertomans and share your expertise.
- **Convenience:** Belong to an organization with professionally developed programs and resources that enable members to provide valuable volunteer service.

Modify your message for different markets. What is important to one prospective member may not be important to another. It is natural for a prospective member to question what will be expected of their Sertoma membership, but they may also be concerned with how your club supports the mission, networking opportunities, and the financial outlay. Club requirements differ, but all members have some basic responsibilities, such as participating in events and meetings, assisting with recruitment, and paying dues. Be open with prospective members about the time commitment and financial obligation of your club.

When recruiting potential members, share your Sertoma experiences and excitement, but avoid being overzealous. No one likes to feel pressured to join. The best way to generate interest is to let your satisfaction and fulfillment speak for you. When communicating your message, remember not to assume that the public is aware of Sertoma. Even if your club has been part of your community for many years, it is not a guarantee that people will know about the organization. Even those who are familiar with Sertoma may not know what your club actually does in your in your community.

Prospective members join Sertoma because they feel the organization will provide value to their lives. Research has shown the leading factor in joining Sertoma is the opportunity for individuals to personally make a difference in the lives of others in their local community and throughout the country. It is important that all clubs share in Sertoman's national mission and make this the focus of their recruitment practices.
Understanding the benefits offered by Sertoma, being prepared to talk about them knowledgeably, and complementing them with personal stories is a comprehensive, effective approach to communicating the value of membership.

IDENTIFYING PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Now that you know what you are marketing, it is easier to determine to whom you should be marketing. Prospecting is the process of identifying people who would be attracted to the Sertoma mission and who would bring ideas, enthusiasm, and needed leadership skills to the organization.

As clubs set out to identify prospective members, one question frequently arises: who should be invited to join Sertoma? The answer is simple: any individual who wants to meet the needs of the community through volunteer service and a passion for Sertoma’s national hearing health mission.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

- **National and Local Affiliates**: You have an existing relationship with these organizations and they have knowledge of Sertoma. The National Affiliates share our hearing health mission.
- **Mission Activities**: The recipients of your club’s sponsorship funds have a vested interest in the strength and success of your club.
- **Former Members**: A majority of Sertomans terminate membership due to time constraints. These individuals believe in the mission of Sertoma and may appreciate being asked to rejoin the club. This is one of the most overlooked target areas and should be reviewed annually. A Sample Letter to Former Members is located in the Recruitment Tools & Resources section of this manual.
- **Business Associates**: Encourage members to research and target individuals in their profession – colleagues, associates, and vendors.
- **Donors**: Track the contact information of donors and others who have supported your fundraisers. If you hold silent auctions or raffles, be sure to collect the names and addresses of participants. Published lists of contributors to other charities that relate to your club’s interests are also a good resource.
- **Local Nonprofits**: Invite associates and friends involved in other volunteer and professional organizations to learn more about Sertoma. Establishing partnerships with these groups and working together on projects is an effective way to reach the members of similar-minded organizations.
- **Local Publications**: Watch for announcements of newly-opened small businesses or community members who have been promoted or appointed to new positions. Send a letter of congratulations, describe Sertoma, and invite them to your next meeting.
- **Chamber of Commerce**: Request a directory of locally-owned businesses.
• *Trade Shows and Community Events:* Set up a booth/table, have literature on display, and collect business cards from interested individuals. Offer a prize drawing as an incentive for prospects to visit your table. Volunteering at these events is also a great way to make contacts and raise the profile of your club in the community.

• *Award Winners:* Recipients of an award from your club often want to give back to the organization that helped them.

**MAKING CONTACT**

Now that you have built a list of potential prospects, it is time to make contact. Inviting prospects to a regularly scheduled club meeting or a recruitment event is one of the most effective ways to educate them about the role of Sertoma in the community and the benefits of membership.

**EMAIL**

Email is an economical, timely method of communication and is often cited as the preferred means of contact by professionals—particularly the younger generation. However, relying on email because it is cost-effective can alienate prospective members because of the lack of personal interaction. When recruiting, email is best used to complement other types of contact. For example, an email could be sent to a prospective member, extending an invitation to a meeting, and then be followed up with a phone call.

**DIRECT MAIL**

Direct mail can create awareness among large numbers of prospective members without seeming intrusive. For any mailing to be successful, clubs must carefully maintain their mailing list to ensure materials are reaching the appropriate targets. Update contact information frequently and remove prospects who are not interested. Personalize direct mail pieces and letters when possible. A Sample Letter to Prospective Member is located in the Recruitment Tools & Resources section of this manual.

**ADVERTISING**

Like mailings, advertising can create awareness among large numbers of prospective members, but is impersonal. However, advertising can complement direct mail efforts by reaching prospects that have not been captured on existing mailing lists. When considering advertising, think beyond traditional venues like newspapers and radio. Online advertising can increase traffic to a club website and you can track hits to determine the effectiveness.

**PHONE CALLS**

Phone calls are effective because they give a personal touch, plus you can answer questions and demonstrate enthusiasm. Calls also elicit immediate feedback and the caller can address
the specific needs or questions of the prospective member. Phone follow-ups to direct mail campaigns can increase the response rate from 3 percent to 10 percent.

TIPS FOR HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT EVENT

- Begin planning at least three months prior to the event.
- Dedicate a club meeting to brainstorming. Ask members to bring lists of prospective members.
- Keep the event short, informative, and interesting. Do not inundate prospective members with too much information.
- Create a brief presentation for the speaker to use as a means to promote club involvement in the community.
- Choose a date and time that appeal to your prospects. Be sure to accommodate individuals who work during the day and avoid holidays.
- Send invitations at least one month prior to the meeting. Invitations should include the Who, What, When, Where, and RSVP.
- Appoint a member as the contact for the event so all questions and RSVPs can be referred to one person.
- Let invitees know they can bring a friend. Prospective members might feel more comfortable attending an event if they can bring a guest.
- Before the event, email members a list of attendees so they are aware of who will be present.
- Make name tags for everyone, indicating whether an attendee is a member or a guest.
- Have a sign-in sheet for guests.
- Begin and end on time.
- Follow up after the meeting with a phone call, email, or letter. A Sample Follow-Up Letter to Attendees and Sample Follow-Up Letter to Individuals Unable to Attend are located in the Recruitment Tools & Resources section of this manual.

MEETING IDEAS

- Hold a short award ceremony in conjunction with the event. This shows prospective members that the club appreciates and acknowledges participation and effort.
- If you are having a big membership drive, plan your event within a few weeks of a big club event or fundraiser, talk it up while the potential members are present, then invite them to volunteer at the event/fundraiser to get hands-on experience.
- Distribute Sertoma materials, such as SAFEars!© supplies, Annual Fund brochures, issues of the Sertoman and Digest, business cards with club contact information, or giveaway items that can serve as both a “thank you” and as a reminder of Sertoma.
- Ask each attendee to make an introduction. Suggest they speak about their business, hobbies, interests, etc.
- Collect business cards for a raffle/prize drawing at the end of the event.
- Ask prospective members to join! Have membership forms available at the meeting.
TIPS FOR PREPARING LETTERS

- Keep communications short and succinct—no more than one page.
- Gear your letter toward your audience. If a prospective member has been recommended by a member or is familiar with Sertoma, the letter will have a different tone than a letter sent to a prospect that is less familiar with Sertoma.
- Send letters on your Sertoma club letterhead.
- Proofread letters carefully.
- Highlight phrases like “invitation only” and “you have been selected.” This relays the message that the recipient has been chosen rather than solicited from a generic audience.
- Request a direct response within a specific period of time.
- Send letters from the club president or membership chair.

CONCLUSION

Membership growth must be a vital concern to every Sertoman. Therefore, every member has the privilege and obligation of seeking new members. Some ways to involve current members in recruitment efforts include:

- Divide your membership into teams and make recruitment a contest.
- Conduct a membership challenge and ask every member to recruit at least one new member this year. Make sure all members have materials to distribute.
- Award a prize to the member with the most new recruits at the end of the club year.

Developing and executing a recruitment strategy can seem overwhelming. Start small, take your time and learn not to take it personally when you ask people to join and they decline. Also, do not let budget concerns discourage you. Outreach to a new audience does not necessarily equal extra expenses. An email campaign to targeted prospects followed by a phone call is a cost-effective and simple approach. And remember, your Sertoma Headquarters staff is always ready to answer questions, offer tips, and direct you to resources to help you develop and launch your recruitment plan.

Membership recruitment is a year-round activity that affects all aspects of club life, including mission activities, public awareness and fundraising. Set realistic goals, create a calendar of tactics that will achieve these goals, and work together to ensure success.
SAMPLE CLUB MARKETING PLAN

OBJECTIVE

In one or two sentences, clearly state what you hope to gain from implementing your marketing plan.

Example: The goal is to grow and diversify membership by identifying prospective members, and increase membership satisfaction by involving a larger percentage of members in club project.

GOALS

List the club’s membership goals for the upcoming club year.

Example:

- Net gain of 5 members
- Improve retention rate

TARGET AUDIENCES

Identify types of members you are trying to attract and prospect sources.

Example: Target audience includes individuals who have a demonstrated interest in doing volunteer work.

PROSPECT SOURCES

- Former members
- Donors & event sponsors
- Business associates
- Personal contacts
- Organizations benefitting from club sponsorship
- Affiliates
- Service to Mankind recipients
- Trade shows and community events

MARKETING YOUR CLUB

Create a list of talking points about the benefits of membership that all members can refer to when speaking about your club and Sertoma. Use the following questions to help develop your talking points:
Why did current members join the club?
What do current members say is the best part about being a Sertoman?
How has your club specifically affected the community?
What makes your club unique?
Why would someone join your club instead of another volunteer organization?

Use the agreed upon talking points as the basis for all marketing communications so a consistent message is presented in all venues.

STRATEGIES

Describe the strategies you plan to use, focusing on those that have been successful in the past.

Example:

- Direct mail
- Advertise in local print media.
- Engage local radio and television stations, if possible.
- Participate in local trade shows, health fairs, and other community events.

BUDGET

Estimate the cost of each tactic, including design, printing, postage, advertising, meeting expenses and booth space.

TIMELINE

In a separate document, map out the timeline for implementation.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Determine who will track goals and how often the plan will be revisited and adjusted.

Example: The membership committee chair will review membership numbers on a monthly basis and compare them to established goals. The chair will report progress to the board of directors, along with any suggestions for modifications to the marketing plan.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Be flexible and revise your marketing plan as necessary.
- Be patient and allow enough time for strategies to have an impact.
- Keep your target audience in mind and make decisions based on their wants and needs.
July 1, 20XX

James Jones, President
Citizens Bank
55 Main Street
Anytown, Anystate 10555

Dear James:

I am writing to invite you to learn more about Downtown Sertoma Club. Our purpose is to meet the needs of communities through volunteer service. Are you familiar with our insert name of fundraiser/big community event here? Last year, we raised over $XX,XXX to support hearing health needs in our community!

Our national Sertoma mission is to improve the quality of life today, through education and support, for those at risk or impacted by hearing loss. We exemplify this through our mission activities, such as SAFE Ears©, A Sound Investment, Adopt-an-Agency, CELEBRATE SOUND Don’t Walk in Silence®, and more! Sertomans also work on other projects that help meet the needs of local communities.

Like you, I understand the challenges of juggling the many demands on my time. Yet, it was an easy decision for me to join Sertoma because of the personal and professional opportunities offered through membership. Not only am I able to participate in programs that change lives, but I have developed lifelong friendships and an invaluable network of business contacts along the way.

Because you exemplify the type of individual who values the opportunity to lend a hand to others, I would like to invite you to our luncheon on Date at Location to learn more about Sertoma and the projects and events in which our club is involved.

I hope you will consider this opportunity to learn more about Sertoma. I will call you on Tuesday to touch base about the luncheon. In the meantime, please visit our club website at www.sertoma.org. If you would like to reach me before then, please call 555-123-4567 or email me at jacksmith@hotmail.com. I look forward to speaking with you soon!

Sincerely,

Jack Smith
Sertoma Club President
July 1, 20XX

James Jones, President
Citizens Bank
55 Main Street
Anytown, Anystate 10555

Dear James:

I know that sometimes in life we have obligations and need to prioritize our time accordingly, but I want to let you know personally that we miss you and your contributions as a member of Downtown Sertoma Club.

Let me catch you up on some of the wonderful projects on which our club has been working. This past year we had several successful fundraisers, including a **CELEBRATE SOUND Don’t Walk in Silence®** event in July that raised more than $10,000! Because we raised more money than anticipated, we were able to present our National Affiliate with funds to purchase additional hearing testing equipment.

In addition to fundraising efforts, we received a grant of $1,500 to refurbish hearing aids for senior citizens, distributed **SAFE**Ears!© materials to our local elementary students, and made an **A Sound Investment** presentation on induction looping.

If you are still looking for a way to help improve the lives of individuals in our community and share in Sertoma fun and fellowship, then coming back to our Sertoma club may be right for you.

Please join us at our meeting as my guest on July 20, as we celebrate our success. Please RSVP to me at by July 15, at 555-123-4567. I hope you will be able to join us!

Sincerely,

Jack Smith
Sertoma Club President
July 21, 20XX

James Jones, President
Citizens Bank
55 Main Street
Anytown, Anystate 10555

Dear James:

Thank you for attending the Downtown Sertoma Club luncheon. We hope you learned a lot about our contributions and efforts in our local community and have an increased interest in our club and mission.

We hope you are excited about the prospect of becoming a member in such a mission-focused organization. As a Sertoman, you will have the opportunity to work on local projects that address unique challenges facing our community today and to participate in programs developed at the national level. Each year, our organization provides more than $20 million through scholarships, grants, other national mission activities, and local community needs.

We hope your interest in our mission will continue. You can be sure that Sertoma membership will enable you to give back to your community, as well as provide opportunities to grow personally.

We will be in touch soon with information about our next meeting. In the meantime, please contact me at 555-123-4567 or jacksmith@hotmail.com with any questions.

I look forward to seeing you again!

Sincerely,

Jack Smith
Sertoma Club President
July 21, 20XX

James Jones, President
Citizens Bank
55 Main Street
Anytown, Anystate 10555

Dear James:

I am sorry you were unable to attend Downtown Sertoma Club’s luncheon on Date. We had a wonderful event with a great group of Sertomans and future Sertomans. We would be delighted if you would join us at our next meeting. At that time, we will discuss leadership opportunities in the club and upcoming projects and events.

I have enclosed information distributed at the meeting. I think you will find that joining a Sertoma club can be an exciting opportunity to make a difference in your community, while making new friends that share a common goal. Through Sertoma membership, we are able to accomplish more than we could do alone.

Carol Johnson, our Membership chair, will be coordinating the upcoming meeting. She will contact you soon to let you know about the time, date and location. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact me at 555-123-4567 or jacksmith@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jack Smith
Sertoma Club President

Enclosures:
Sertoma & You brochure
Downtown Sertoma Club brochure

*Additional information can be found at www.sertoma.org.
FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO SERVE, THERE IS SERTOMA

For over 100 years Sertoma members across the nation have come together to meet the needs of our communities through volunteer service. Join our mission and improve the quality of life for those at risk or impacted by hearing loss.

WHY SERTOMA?
A collection of people acting as one can create change for the betterment of all. Every year, Sertoma clubs raise more than $20 million for community needs.

“Never have I been a part of such a ‘make it happen’ group of individuals. I honestly believe that there is nothing we cannot do. The compassion that each of us possesses for other members of our community is truly humbling. I am honored to be a Sertoma member and greatly anticipate all that is to come.” – Sertoma Member

SERTOMA MISSION ACTIVITIES
- The Communicative Disorders Scholarship is for students pursuing advanced degrees in audiology or speech-language pathology. Sertoma provides more funds nationally for graduate level study in communicative disorders than any other single organization.
- The Scholarship for Students who are Hard of Hearing or Deaf is for students with clinically significant bilateral hearing loss attending a four-year college or university.
- SAFEars!® is an education awareness program to increase awareness of noise-induced hearing loss.
- CELEBRATE SOUND Don’t Walk in Silence™ is a national fund- and awareness-raising event to help promote hearing health in our communities.
- Adopt-an-Agency is a network of nonprofit, hearing health organizations that share the same mission and goals, helping expand awareness and impacting individuals with communicative disorders.
- Organizations that are part of the Adopt-an-Agency program are eligible for Community Grants. The grants are for hearing health programs and projects, such as hearing equipment, program supplies, screenings, and new program development.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP
- Leadership training and personal growth opportunities.
- Networking and learning about your community and its priorities.
- An opportunity to make a real difference – the ultimate “feel good” opportunity.