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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

As the officer in charge of membership growth and retention, the vice president holds an extremely vital position within the local lodge. Your focus is to innovate and nurture lodge recruitment campaigns and strategies, as well as help devise programming, which encourages current members to stay active in Sons of Norway. Growth in membership produces new talent, ideas and volunteers. It also enhances a lodge's ability to raise funds, to gain visibility and to be a positive force within its community.

In addition to membership responsibilities, the vice president should also be prepared to replace the lodge president in the event that he or she is unable to perform his or her duties.

**II. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Working to attract and retain members is an enormous responsibility - one that should not be undertaken alone. You should, however, be providing the guidance and leadership for your lodge.

A critical component in the development and maintenance of an effective membership program is the establishment of an active membership committee. This committee is appointed by your lodge president. As vice president, you would typically serve as chair, though this role may be filled by another member. The committee should include any officers (*such as the membership/financial secretary or publicity director*) whose focus is on growth and retention and enthusiastic members who are excited about the development of membership-focused programming.

The primary duties of the membership committee are to set membership goals, oversee the effort to recruit new members and to encourage current members to be involved with the lodge. They also focus on member retention and may contact delinquent members to prevent them from being suspended.

The committee should meet as needed to review the lodge's progress in its recruitment and retention goals, to analyze current programming and to plan new events and initiatives. The committee should evaluate each program or initiative at its close and include suggestions for future improvements.

NOTES

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

### **III. TIPS FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

#### **A. GOALS**

As your lodge sets to work on recruitment and retention, begin by setting specific membership goals. These will assist you as you brainstorm in deciding what tactics you need to engage in to achieve your goal(s). Your goals should include measurable outcomes so that you can evaluate properly at the close of a campaign or initiative.

#### **B. LODGE LIFE**

Encourage your lodge to be warm and friendly to all newcomers. Make sure there is a greeter on hand for the entirety of the meeting to assist and welcome visitors. A good first impression will go a long way for lodges with the introduction of prospective members. Get newly added members involved. Ensure that they receive introduction to other lodge members. Try to engage them in cultural or volunteer activities from the start. An increased investment in the lodge will improve the likelihood of retention.

#### **C. COMMUNITY CONTACT**

Advertise and use publicity to heighten community awareness of your Sons of Norway lodge. The first step in garnering new members is to make them aware that you exist. Once you've become a visible entity in your local community, entice the public to attend meetings and events by offering great programming. Encourage your lodge to get involved with community service programs, such as clean-up days, or tutoring through the Sons of Norway Adopt A School program. Advertise Sons of Norway's good works and gain notoriety as a positive force in your community.

#### **D. OTHER LODGES**

Sons of Norway has fantastic lodges undertaking innovative programs to recruit and retain their members. Contact lodges you read about in the *Viking*, talk to your zone director, district vice president or Sons of Norway membership coordinator for some assistance in pairing up with a lodge that has tried programming in which you're interested.

## IV. EXAMPLES OF MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

### A. NEW MEMBER SEMINAR DINNER

A New Member Seminar Dinner is a very effective event your lodge can host to attract new members. It is planned in coordination with the Marketing Department at Sons of Norway Headquarters and your assigned Financial Benefits Counselor, who pay 100% of the cost for the meals of any prospective new members and their attending sponsors (up to \$400). There must be at least 10 prospective new members at the dinner in order for these costs to be covered, and only one sponsor is allowed per each prospective member. Other expenses, such as meal costs for other attendees, advertising and publicity, and hall rental, are the responsibility of the lodge. These outlays can be covered by the lodge's treasury and/or fees charged for the dinner. Contact the Director of Agencies at Sons of Norway Headquarters or your local Financial Benefits Counselor for more information.

### B. SPECIAL EVENT WITH A RECRUITMENT FOCUS

A great way to attract new members is to invite them to a special event, such as a torsk dinner, Julebord, Syttende Mai celebration, cultural skills demonstrations, a dance or a picnic. This is a great way to showcase the fun and camaraderie enjoyed by members of a Sons of Norway lodge. Some other ideas for special events include:

- An open house, where your lodge can show off its various programs, cultural activities and its fellowship
- Travel related programs, featuring a speaker and or resources available from Sons of Norway Headquarters.
- Language or Cultural Skills classes
- Videos or slide presentations (*available from Headquarters*)
- Sporting events, such as a Barneløpet

**THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!**

### C. MEMBERSHIP DRIVE AT A PUBLIC FESTIVAL OR FAIR

Town or county fairs, ethnic festivals and other community celebrations provide a fantastic opportunity for your lodge to get the word out about Sons of Norway. Some possible activities include:

- Renting booth space
- Having a float in a parade
- Holding a drawing for a free membership sponsored by your lodge
- Handing out various materials, such as marketing brochures, *Viking* and *Viking for Kids* magazines and other promotional materials
- Raffling off Norwegian gifts
- Marketing crafts such as hardanger embroidery
- Selling delicious and fun food items such as rosettes or Vikings on a Stick
- Providing cultural skills demonstrations

Contact the membership coordinator at Sons of Norway Headquarters for more ideas and information about available resources (800-945-8851 or [nneuman@sofn.com](mailto:nneuman@sofn.com)).

## V. AVAILABLE RESOURCES

### A. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

#### SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE MARKETING BROCHURE

This marketing brochure is an excellent way to introduce non-members to Sons of Norway. In the brochure, prospective members will find information on our benefits programs and philanthropic opportunities, as well as a brief history of our organization. A large, color map that highlights landmarks and other points of interest within Norway is also included. At the back, there are answers to questions frequently asked by prospective members, as well as a pocket to include a membership application, a lodge brochure, or leaflet for upcoming lodge events.

#### LODGE BROCHURE

A lodge-specific brochure, created by Sons of Norway Headquarters staff, is a great way to introduce prospective members to your lodge. Information should be submitted by your publicity director using a "Lodge Brochure Fact Sheet", which is available from the Supply department at Headquarters or for download from the members section of the Sons of Norway website. Three to four weeks after receiving your completed sheet along with a small set-up fee (*as indicated in the Lodge Supply Catalog*), a paper master copy and computer files on a CD-ROM will be mailed back to you. Either the paper copy or the computer file can be taken to your local print shop or photocopy shop for production. The lodge covers the costs of printing and materials.

#### SONS OF NORWAY DISPLAY BOOTH

Sons of Norway has trade show displays that may be borrowed for use at festivals and other events. These lightweight 6' wide x 5' high tabletop units are a very effective and professional way to promote Sons of Norway programs and financial benefits. To reserve a display booth unit, contact the supply department at Headquarters at least 4-6 weeks in advance. There is no fee for

borrowing the units, however the lodge does pay for the insured return shipping costs back to Headquarters.

#### OTHER PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Sons of Norway *Viking* magazines, *Viking for Kids*, *Joy of Connecting* DVD and VHS cassette, brochures for Cultural Skills and Sports Medal Programs, etc. are all available to order from the Supply department at Sons of Norway Headquarters. Check the Lodge Supply Catalog for details.

#### GIVE-AWAY ITEMS

Several fun give-a-way items are available for purchase from Sons of Norway Headquarters Supply department: Sons of Norway balloons, magnets, pens and ice scrapers. Check the Lodge Supply Catalog for details.

### B. OTHER TOOLS

#### MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION KIT

The Membership Recruitment and Retention Kit is meant to assist lodges in planning to grow membership and retain members. In addition to the Something for Everyone marketing brochure and an events poster, the kit includes success stories from our lodges and star recruiters on what has worked for them in recruitment and retention. There is also a lodge publicity toolkit and event planning guide, which respectively offer guidance in promotion and media relations and in planning, executing and evaluating different types of lodge events.

#### SONS OF NORWAY HEADQUARTERS STAFF

The membership coordinator and membership services staff people are excellent resources. Use them to research the status of lodge members and lodge size, or to brainstorm ideas for membership recruitment and retention.

**VIKING RESOURCE AND “MEMBER MATTERS”**

The new “Member Matters” section in the *Viking* is eight pages, appearing four times a year, dedicated to informing members about happenings within Sons of Norway. Recruitment techniques or inspiring lodge stories or event ideas are presented.

The Viking Resource is a quarterly online publication containing valuable information and tips, spanning from membership recruitment and retention to upcoming deadlines and new programs. Viking Resource can be found in the members section of the Sons of Norway website.

**DISTRICT TRAINING**

All districts offer training for officers and interested members. Be it leadership or membership training, these sessions can assist your lodge in practicalities, such as how to set goals and engage your entire lodge for membership recruitment and retention.

**C. INCENTIVES**

**RECRUITMENT PINS**

Recruitment pins, along with a list of recipients, are mailed to you at the beginning of the year, for the previous year’s recruitment activities. There are three denominations of pins that can be earned: 1 member pins, 5 member pins and 10 member pins. Recruiting members are awarded pins based on the number of new members they introduced to Sons of Norway during the previous year. Recruiters also receive certificates celebrating the exact number of members recruited. (For example, if Lars Johnson signed up 7 of his friends, he would receive a 5 member pin and a 7 member certificate.) An exciting new design for the pins is introduced each year. To receive credit, a member’s name and member number should be written on the new member’s application on the line that

says: “Application Recommended By”. Contact Sons of Norway membership services with any questions (800-945-8851 or [fraternal@sofn.com](mailto:fraternal@sofn.com)).

**INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

There will frequently be incentive programs that can be use to motivate your members to recruit. The international board often puts a program in place every few years. Check your Viking Resource for more information pertaining to any current or upcoming programs.

Likewise, each district may set up programs to encourage the recruitment of new members. Contact your zone director or district vice president for information about these incentives.

Lastly, consider creating an incentive program for your lodge. Perhaps an entry to win a Norwegian sweater would motivate some people to recruit ten new members.

**D. MEMBERSHIP REPORTS**

Both Sons of Norway Headquarters and your district will provide you with helpful membership reports throughout the year. As lodge vice president, you will also receive the Monthly Lodge Activity Reports for any members in the general category lodges (000 and 999) in your district from the district vice president. The membership committee should contact any of these general members who live in your area and encourage them to transfer into your lodge. If you have any questions about the information on these reports please contact membership services at Headquarters.

#### **MONTHLY LODGE ACTIVITY REPORT**

This report is mailed or e-mailed by Headquarters on the 2nd of each month to you and to the financial/membership secretary of your lodge. The report lists any changes made to your members' records during the previous month, such as:

- Address changes
- Cancellations, suspensions and deaths
- Members transferring in and out of your lodge
- New and reinstated members
- Members whose dues payments are 45 days past due

The membership committee can use this report to follow up with members who delinquent in paying their dues

#### **MEMBERSHIP LISTINGS**

These lists provide vital information about your members, such as their addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, effective dates, birth dates and paid-to dates. These lists are not sent automatically, but can be downloaded at any time from the members section of [www.sonsofnorway.com](http://www.sonsofnorway.com) or can be requested from membership services at Sons of Norway Headquarters. Lists can be sent either by e-mail or postal mail. These listings are up to date the moment they are downloaded or created by headquarters.



