

Presentation #3 – A Timeline of Membership Experiences

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As a Sons of Norway leader, it's just as important to know how best to use recruitment and retention resources. Understanding this can dramatically improve the experience of a new member and increase the likelihood they will renew their membership. Let's spend some time walking through recruiting a new member all the way through their first year of membership. Along the way, we'll talk about strategies to use some of the resources Sons of Norway has to offer.

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Step 1. Raising Awareness of Sons of Norway

As a recruiter, reach out to a friend or family member with the aim of welcoming them to membership. Keep in mind, from the recruiter's perspective, everyone is a potential member. Why? Because Sons of Norway has something for everyone! The key is, potential members don't know they're potential members yet. It's your job as a recruiter to let them know by filling them in on everything Sons of Norway has to offer.

How can you do this? First, get to know their interests: For instance, do they enjoy traveling? Sons of Norway's partnerships with Icelandair and Borton Overseas would be an ideal reason to join. Next, provide them with information about Sons of Norway. The Viking Magazine or resources from the Sons of Norway supply department are great examples. It's also important to keep those membership applications on hand.

Invite the potential member to a lodge meeting. Be sure your meeting information is already included in the materials you've provided them.

The next part, and it's so important we'll highlight it over and over again, is "the ask." Ask the potential member to join. From surveys we've done, we know the main reason people don't join Sons of Norway is because no one took the time to ask them!

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Step 2. A Potential Member Attends a Lodge Meeting

So now the potential member is at your lodge meeting. This is where a lodge greeter can be a significant asset. Be sure to welcome members and guests at the door. Since this may be the first Sons of Norway meeting they've attended, it's important to be a resource for them. Answering questions and introducing guests to other members is a great way for their first Sons of Norway experience to be a positive one.

Since you never know when a potential member might attend a meeting, always strive to have a compelling program – even more so because our current members expect it. In this example, let's use one of the cultural skills programs to offer an introductory lesson.

At some point before the meeting disbands, someone in your lodge should again ask the potential member to join the lodge.

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Step 3. President Calls a Potential Member

At this point, your potential guest has shown a pretty strong interest in your lodge. Capitalize on this with a phone call from the lodge president. Are there any lodges here that give guests a call back following a meeting? As we've mentioned, a phone call to a potential member shows how you value them as a person and future member.

In addition to thanking a guest for attending a meeting, it's a good idea to include another ask to join Sons of Norway.

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Step 4: Guest Becomes a Member

At this point your lodge's hardwork has paid off and they're a member – congratulations!

It's important to know these next steps.

First, a notification is sent to lodge officers that a member has joined, assuming they have signed up online. This is a good time to send them a note, thanking them for joining.

A couple weeks later, the new member will receive their member card in the mail.

A little while after that, a new member kit arrives, giving them information about what Sons of Norway has to offer as well as their new member pin.

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Step 5. A Brief Bio Appears in the Newsletter

Some lodges will include a short biography about the new member in their lodge newsletter. This is a great way to welcome them into the lodge.

If your lodge isn't doing this, consider it! It can be a light and fun piece, and include hobbies, interests and other information that will help our new member socialize with other members of your lodge.

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Step 6. Distribute a Calendar of Events

It's a good idea to keep your new member engaged with the lodge. To do this, they'll need to know what's going on! A calendar of lodge events will help them get acquainted with activities and help them integrate lodge events into their own calendars. Plus, with an idea of what to expect, the new member is more likely to invite friends of their own.

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Step 7. An Invitation to other Lodge Activities

Inviting a new member to an upcoming event or program is the role of everyone in your lodge. Inviting them participate in a volunteer project, sports medal or cultural skills program is a great way for your lodge to get them involved with fellow members, Plus, you're helping fulfill their need for a personal connection with fellow members.

In this instance, we'll invite your new member to participate in a group dancing cultural skills program following the meeting they attended.

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Step 8. Introduce the New Member to Your FBC

We all know that Sons of Norway's financial products are the backbone to the organization and are one of our top member benefits. That's why it's crucial for new members understand the role our team of Financial Benefits Counselors play in helping the lodge and our members. Even if a new member isn't in the market for a product at that moment, an introduction to the lodge's FBC can help them understand more about Sons of Norway and make them aware of the resources available to them.

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Step 9. Happy Anniversary

Let's start with Membership Secretaries: On your monthly activity reports you'll know when your members are up for renewal. Share this information with the lodge President or Vice President.

In this case, just before their renewal date, the lodge President should call our member and gently remind them it's time to renew. This is important for your lodge. We know we once members have their memberships suspended they're far less likely to renew and we'll lose them.

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Step 10: Looking into the Future

As we look past the first year of member's experience with Sons of Norway, there are a few things that we should all be aware of.

First, all members should have the opportunity to take the member satisfaction survey, located in the members section of the Sons of Norway website. This will allow us to both gauge our effectiveness at the meeting the needs of members, plus find ways to capture their excitement and increase their connection with the lodge.

Second, after a year of membership we should be looking at members for potential leadership roles. Any sooner and we run the risk of overwhelming them. Not only does this strengthen their potential bond with the lodge, but it helps keep existing lodge officers from getting overworked.

Finally, don't forget that members and their children and grandchildren are eligible for scholarships through the Sons of Norway Foundation. This is an outstanding member benefit reserved almost exclusively for individuals with at least a year of membership under their belts.

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Don't forget!

We're all in this together. It's likely that a lodge in your district or even your zone has experienced membership challenges similar to ones you might encounter. As a Sons of Norway lodge, you have access to a network of hundreds of other lodges working toward the same goal: Celebrating our Norwegian heritage in our communities.

With that in mind, solicit feedback. Connect with lodges around you to learn what's working and see what other lodges have tried. We don't always need to be reinventing the wheel to be meeting the expectations of our members.

Finally, regarding any questions. If your lodge doesn't know something, ask! Sons of Norway Headquarters staff is a great resource. Your zone director is a great resource. Your district officers are great resources. There are many people who all want to help your lodge succeed, so do be sure to reach out.