

Targeted Recruiting and the Re-imagining of the Senior Member Experience

Major Jacob Gerstein

Tuskegee Cadet Squadron Commander

Captain Colleen McCormick

Tuskegee Cadet Squadron Advisor to the Commander



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Overview



- CAP Recruiting vs. National Volunteerism Trends
- Broadening the Appeal
- Targeted Recruiting in Action

The State of Volunteerism



- Modest decline in total volunteers in US (by 2%) over past five years
- Of individuals 16 and older, $\frac{1}{4}$ volunteered
- Women more likely to volunteer than men (28% vs. 21%)
- Age group most likely to volunteer: 35-54
- 40% of volunteers have a college degree
- More education = greater likelihood

The State of Volunteerism



- Volunteers spent a median of 52 hours on volunteer activities in 2015
- Only about 25-30% of volunteers give more than 100 hours a year
- Only about 6% give more than 500 per year

Other Trends



- Episodic/short term volunteer projects over long-term involvement
- Skills-based and *pro-bono* volunteering (particularly for volunteers under 35)
- Hectic work and family schedules
- Volunteers want to see tangible results of their efforts

Recruiting: Why?



Old Attitude #1: Build numbers for numbers' sake.

New Strategy #1: Recruit who you need to support the program you envision.

Ask:

- What positions at your unit remain unfilled?
- What specific tasks need more manpower?
- What expanded programming would you like to offer?

Recruiting: Why?



You should ALWAYS be planning to supplement or replace current personnel.

Recruiting: Who?



Old Attitude #2: Get people in the door, slot them into roles later.

New Strategy #2: Get people who have specific abilities and motivations to fill specific and essential roles.

TARGETED RECRUITING

Take a cue from the world of hiring:
Recruit for specific duty assignments.

Recruiting: Who?



LIE: The only adults really interested in CAP are pilots and cadet parents.

TRUTH: The benefits of CAP—**when correctly articulated**—appeal to most demographics. Yes, even those demographics that CAP has traditionally had a difficult time recruiting.

Look for people who will derive as much benefit from CAP as CAP will derive from them.

Recruiting: Who?



It's almost impossible to tell on first contact—or even at initial squadron visit—who is going to end up joining the unit, much less who the most stellar performers will be.

Therefore:

- Give every interested person the same kind of attention.
- Work to identify the aspects of CAP most appealing to each.
- Be a reliable contact.
- ALWAYS follow up. Don't write anyone off.

Recruiting: Where?



- Volunteerism websites (Idealist, VolunteerMatch, Create The Good, etc.)
- Local skill communities
- Community forums (newsletters, distribution lists, social media, etc.)
- Colleges and universities

- Share
- Tweet
- Email
- Post

ORGANIZATION PROFILE



Tuskegee Cadet Squadron, Civil Air Patrol (U. S. Air Force Auxiliary)

Mission Statement

Supporting America's communities with emergency response, diverse aviation and ground services, youth development, and promotion of air, space and cyber power.

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Cause Area



Location

200 McChord Street (Hanger 1)
Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB)
Washington, DC 20032

Volunteer with us! We have 11 Opportunities

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

MORE INFORMATION

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Tuskegee Cadet Squadron, Civil Air Patrol (U. S. A...)

 Administrative Support
Executive Adm...

Finance Specialist

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 Financial Planning
Bookkeeping

Public Affairs Specialist

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 Photography
Journalism

Historian

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 Public Speaking
Curating

Recruiting: How?



Create specific vacancies for specific positions you need filled.

- Traditionally, CAP has presented one recruiting pitch to everyone. Instead, **tailor** pitches to the specific contributions you need. This approach:
 - Makes people feel needed
 - Keeps people focused through the lengthy application/Level 1 process AND gets them more excited about participating
 - Gets necessary skills and talents into the unit

Recruiting: How?



Emphasize the benefit to the volunteer!

- In today's job market, many people are looking to build professional experience in a volunteer capacity:
 - Students
 - Recent graduates
 - Individuals changing careers
 - Individuals reentering the workforce
 - Individuals looking for U.S. experience

CAP is the perfect place for this!

Recruiting: How?



CAP is uniquely positioned as a volunteer org because it can fill the needs of a wide range of volunteers:

- Seeking to contribute to the community
- Seeking professional development and leadership experience
- Seeking adventure and the chance to try new things
- Seeking a social group

WARNING:



Targeted recruiting does NOT replace the need for recruiting booths, personal appeals, and other general methods of outreach, nor does it preclude the successful recruitment of walk-ins. However, it complements these approaches to better serve the unit's needs.

But does it work?



Case Study:

Tuskegee Cadet Squadron (MER-DC-051)

October 2015 – August 2017 (22 months)

- Targeted Online Ads:
 - Yielded 238 inquiries (276 inquiries total during this period)
 - Yielded 98 squadron visits (128 squadron visits total during this period)
 - Yielded 40 new members (59 new members total during this period)

Total recruiting efforts: October 2015-August 2017



Recruiting Method	# Expressed Interest	# Visited Squadron	# Joined Unit	Conversion of Visitors
Person-to-Person	14	9	5	56%
Passive*	13	13	9 (1 in pipeline)	69%
Cadet Parent	5	5	4 (1 in pipeline)	80%
Targeted Ads	238	98	40 (2 in pipeline)	42%
Other	6	3	1	33%
TOTAL	276	128	59	41%

*Includes walk-ins, those who found us through the base, and through unit and national websites

Demographics of New Members



Recruiting Method	Average Age	Gender: M/F %	Minority
Person-to-Person	38	60/40	40%
Passive	35	78/22	44%
Cadet Parent	46	50/50	75%
Targeted Ads	35	42/58	68%
Other	18	0/100	100%

Targeted Recruiting



Not only did this strategy yield solid recruitment growth, but it also recruited in a way that preserved the squadron's diversity and enhanced its effectiveness.

- Successful recruiting of demographics that CAP needs but struggles to tap into:
 - Individuals in the 21-45 age range
 - Women and minorities

Diversity



If your squadron doesn't look like the community that it is a part of, you are missing out on valuable resources who could help you carry out CAP's missions.

Skill Building



Many of our new recruits bring important prior experience/training/degrees in the areas to which they will be contributing.

Lessons Learned



- Volunteer interest peaks and ebbs: We've found that interest increases in the fall as well as just after the new year, and dips in the summer months.
- Our squadron's location is terrible. We're in a city, but don't have good public transit access.
- People have crazy, unpredictable lives (so always be recruiting more of them).
- You never know who your best recruits are going to be.
- It's much easier to recruit people when you already have a staff and a program in place (so don't wait until you lose a key squadron member).

Best Practices



- Give every potential member the same time and attention.
- Respond quickly and reach out frequently. Reminders are really helpful!
- Share with other units.
- Ensure that someone is assigned to guide newcomers.
- Personalize the experience for visitors.
- Figure out what your unit's challenges and advantages are (location/demographics/resources/culture/etc.) and learn how to work with those.
- Be transparent and realistic about your unit's struggles, the membership process, and CAP operations.

Onboarding and Retention



- Onboarding checklist.
- Specialized and timely training for new Senior Members.
 - Could model on the Great Start program for cadets.
- Get them through Level 1 and assigned to their duty position as quickly as possible (which is easier because they know what they are there to do).
 - Cadet Protection training **MUST** be completed within 60 days of joining.

Onboarding and Retention



- Have consistent Senior Member programming during squadron meetings.
- Make a roadmap for their first 6-12 months.
- Trust them with real responsibilities **IMMEDIATELY.**

Recruiting: Vision for the Future



- Ongoing management of targeted recruiting ads (ideally at the Wing or Region level) to fill skill vacancies at the unit level.
- Expanded promotion of CAP as a leadership/career/experience learning lab for senior members—not just cadets!
- Local collaboration and relationship-building with colleges/universities, skill communities, and other non-profits.

Recruiting: Vision for the Future



- Deliberate cultivation of cadets approaching transition to senior membership.
- Greater acceptance of—and ability to serve—member's individual goals and needs.
- Expanded inclusivity and a diverse volunteer force.
- Emphasis on CAP/life balance to prevent burnout of high performers.

Civil Air Patrol

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A nighttime photograph of the Anaheim Marriott hotel. The building is illuminated with warm lights, and its windows are lit up. In the foreground, there is a large, curved fountain with water cascading over a stone wall. The sky is dark, and the overall scene is vibrant and modern.

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Anaheim, California

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