

Recruiting New Leaders

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One of the signs of a healthy and vital community is recognizing the need to recruit new members into the leadership role when the time comes. The most successful recruitment efforts are conducted by the people already in leadership positions. Leadership of program and communities often change over a course of time, but what does that change look like and how do you “recruit” the new leadership to help continue to drive the mission of your group? Without great leadership to organize and provide others with the way to act, a likelihood of real change is very slim.



When you think of recruiting new leadership for a role, ask the question, “Who isn’t at the table that should be?” What groups or individuals should be involved in order to have a truly representative community organization, event or project? Making sure a group is inclusive is the best way to build in cooperation from the beginning. Also think about looking for skill assets that someone can bring to the conversation instead of names. One of the problems caused by relying on the same people for the same tasks over and over again is that those people will eventually tire of making the same contribution. A simple way to identify new people to recruit is to focus on the skills needed for the task and not the person.

While the effort to bring new people into the leadership arena is important, it’s also important to recognize that even the smallest and most limited volunteer contribution can be part of the leadership activities of a community. What is important, is seeing how each contribution fits into the whole picture, and by never discounting any effort, no matter how small, the door to increased involvement remains open. Recruiting new leaders by asking for help becomes most effective when a task is very clearly defined. This means describing the skills needed, describing the task in terms of what the expectations are as well the time commitment required. Finally, defining the task should also cover some ideas about how this role fits into the whole scheme of community improvement.

If you currently serve in a leadership role, it is important to know how to better yourself to continue to be a great leader in your community. Look at how you understand your community and the engagement in your community. Your job as a leader is to know what lies at the heart of the community that you serve, make informed decisions and foster a clear and maintained vision of major issues affecting your community. Leading with empathy and instilling compassion for community members allows for the community to see themselves as leaders.

Lead by being adaptable and open-minded helps you meet community needs and evolve with the times. Of course, effective communication and collaboration with community members and other stakeholders are crucial to this endeavor. The best leaders are one-of-a-kind individuals who remain relevant with large groups of people. Another powerful driver of confidence and self-assurance is self-reflection. Without substantial self-reflection, you cannot gain a true understanding of yourself, your leadership characteristics, or your ability to affect others. To put it a different way, you can’t influence others if you don’t understand them, and you cannot understand others if you don’t understand yourself.

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