

Recruitment Methods

How Do We Recruit Members?

There are things you can do to actively recruit new members, and there are things you can do to make your association more visible in the hope that music teachers in your area will find out about you and want to join. This section contains guidelines for proactive recruiting. For more ideas on increasing your association's visibility, see the section about Publicity.

Recruitment Methods

There are several methods you can use to proactively recruit new members. Guidelines to get you started or enhance your current recruitment efforts follow in the next sections:

- Use word of mouth. See "Getting Started."
- Distribute brochures through music stores and instrument dealers.
- Give brochures to libraries, real estate agents, Chambers of Commerce and the like for further distribution.
- Do a direct mail or e-mail campaign to names on your prospect list and names you can obtain from other sources
- Contact local college and university music departments. See "Recruiting Collegiate Members."

In addition, you can do some publicity to increase the visibility of your group, and prospective members will come to you:

- Place an article in a local newspaper or city magazine about your group, a prominent member or remarkable student.
- Send press releases to local newspapers, radio and TV stations to announce member and student news and promote MTA events.
- Make yourself available to local newspapers as an expert and source for information on music-related topics—the more you get quoted, the better for your association.
- Offer to speak to civic groups, PTAs, church groups and other audiences about topics such as the benefits of music study to developing children or senior citizens.

Findings from the American Society of Association Executives show at least 33 percent of nonmembers had not joined their representative professional association because they had *never heard* of the group. There are probably music teachers in your area who have never heard of MTNA. The more exposure you can get for your members and your group's activities, the better. For more ideas and specific information on how to do publicity, see the section about Publicity.

Distribute Fliers

Once you've prepared your state association brochure and local association brochure or flier, you can distribute them to music teachers in your area (along with national membership brochures). Make distribution a team effort.

Brainstorm ways to get the brochures into the hands of music teachers in your area who are not familiar with MTNA. Here are some possibilities:

- Local music and instrument dealers: Ask them to leave a stack by cash register or in literature rack. Ask for distribution at workshops they sponsor.
- Piano technicians: Ask them to leave a brochure with each nonmember teacher whose piano

they tune.

- Community chorus, band or chamber music group: Ask them to distribute to participants.
- Public or private schools: Ask for brochures to be placed in music instructors mailboxes, in visible/central locations, in music library, in lobby or lounge.
- Church musicians
- Music therapists
- Performing musicians
- Real estate agents
- Chamber of commerce
- Libraries (with complimentary subscription to your newsletter to display)
- Post offices
- Grocery stores

Direct Mail Or E-Mail

College faculty and students are only two audiences you could try to reach with a mailing or e-mailing. You can also contact:

- Your own prospect list
- Former members who have let their membership lapse
- Local music dealers' mailing lists of music teachers
- Music teachers who have attended workshops at local music stores
- Nonmembers who attended your conferences or meetings
- Members of other music associations (directories can sometimes be found in libraries; you may be able to purchase names of those members in your state)
- Subscribers to music journals and publications (again, you may be able to purchase the names of subscribers in your area)
- Music patrons in your area who may be interested in MTNA
- Music businesses in your area
- Other music professionals in your area mentioned above (school music teachers, music therapists, piano technicians and so forth)

Keep building your prospect list with names referred by anyone in your association. Read the local newspaper for announcements about new studios or other music-oriented businesses opening in your community. Be sure to send your prospect names, e-mails and addresses to MTNA national headquarters staff so they can periodically follow up on your leads.

Your communication with them can include any of the materials described above. Use your website or the National website at www.mtna.org as a resource to direct recipients of your e-mail or letter.

You should have a different message to appeal to each type of prospect you're mailing to. The message should be presented professionally. The letter or e-mail needs to be creative and convincing. You've got to grab the reader's attention just to get them to read the whole letter to find out about the many benefits of membership in your association.

- When developing your membership recruitment letter, be sure to touch on the following areas:
- What is the most important benefit of membership for this particular prospect?
- What information will support this key benefit?
- What will motivate the prospect to join? (What can MTNA do for this person?) One main idea should emerge clearly and emphatically. This idea whether social, economic or

professional—must be important to the prospect.

- Do not over-promise the benefits of membership.

Take time to brainstorm as a group and decide how to present membership to your prospects. Have several people work on the cover letter if necessary—let it go through several drafts and revisions. The letter is important. See the examples on the following pages.

Once you've developed a prospect list, perfected your letter and assembled your information, you'll need to decide when to get in touch with your prospects. Summer is traditionally a bad time to contact music teachers. Collegiate teachers and students are especially hard to reach, but even independent teachers sometimes scale back over the summer and take vacations. Late spring might be the best time to pitch membership, since the new membership year always begins on July 1. If your state offers pro-rated dues for a six-month membership, November or early December would be a good time to contact people since six-month membership begins January 1.

Of course, you can (and should) contact prospects more than once! A prospect may not be ready to join when the first offer is received but may be ready the second or third time. MTNA recommends that state and local associations should conduct at least one new member recruitment campaign each year. If you can do more, that's even better. The campaign should be in addition to other recruitment efforts conducted on an ongoing basis.

Membership recruitment should be part of your association's annual budget. It's relatively easy to estimate what your costs will be. MTNA provides national member recruitment brochures at no cost to affiliated state and local associations and association websites can be linked to e-mails.

You can figure out how many new members you'd need to recruit in order for the campaign to break even based on your state and local dues. You'll probably exceed this number! However, if your first campaign doesn't net many new members, don't give up. Try a different approach. Try a different time of year. Try reaching out to prospects from different sources. Try asking again (some people just need to think about things for a while).

Recruitment Tips From Our Members

Don't forget non-pianists. Encourage collaborative events.

Seek out young teachers. Provide childcare.

Pay part or all of dues for a first-time member (active, or collegiate in nearby collegiate chapter). One state allocated money for this purpose for a specified period of time.

Use testimonials about the value of MTNA (websites, brochures, meetings and activities where prospects are invited).

Spring social—bring guests. Have outline of next year's meetings and activities.

Get-acquainted fall social—bring guests. Have ice-breaker, then committee chairs describe their function and plans for the year.

Use the Internet: Facebook, Youtube, online forums.

Travel grants for collegiate chapters: Local/state association pay conference registration or hotel for state conference/national conference.

Be aware of the many benefits of MTNA as you recruit:

- *American Music Teacher*
- *MTNA e-Journal*
- Education opportunities at local, state, national level
- Networking
- Performance/competitions

- Professional certification
- Online resources
- Incentive programs for the “everyday” student
- Insurance and Financial Services
- Grant Opportunities
- Empowerment

Be welcoming to prospective or new members, not intimidating.

New member lunch: every member bring a prospective member.

Hold teachers’ recitals and invite local teachers and families not involved in MTNA.

Hold a monthly “musicale” that includes the performance of solos and duets as well as sight reading new materials and talking about teaching issues—invite non-member teachers.

Offer a package that will appeal to local teachers, such as discounts on books.

Hold workshops open to all teachers, not just members.

Have state college chair develop list of college teachers (including nonmembers) who would be willing and able to give presentations at local meetings, etc.

Partner with other organizations.

Ask college faculty members for names of colleagues who would benefit from MTNA membership—or have them work on recruitment.

Encourage “member get a member,” every member invite a non-member to a meeting or activity.

In addition to flyers, use striking posters.

Keep Recruiting

Seeking new members is a continuous process. You should always be thinking of available opportunities to attract new members. If something works particularly well for you, let the national office know and they’ll share it with other states and locals. Here are some ideas:

1. Get involved in community arts and music groups, and volunteer for their activities and events. Arts supporters in a community usually encompass a wide network of professionals and music lovers. Tapping into that network can payoff in many ways for your association. By networking with other music-oriented groups, you’ll uncover individuals who may be interested in joining MTNA. Plus, your involvement in other community arts activities will help raise awareness of your association. You will also be supporting music in your community—a cause from which everyone benefits. All it takes is one phone call offering your assistance (and that of others in your association). Most community arts organizations will immediately take you up on your offer!
2. When your MTA organizes a teacher workshop or seminar, be sure to place membership brochures on each seat. You should also consider saying a few words about your association and its programs and activities at the beginning of the workshop. Take this opportunity to inform them of the benefits of membership. Then invite the workshop participants to fill out the membership application before they leave.
3. Give any nonmember attending your state convention an MTNA membership brochure and the membership recruitment materials for your state (and appropriate local) association. If you have extras, give them a back issue of *American Music Teacher* and your state newsletter.
4. Always include information on how to become a member, or an actual membership

application, in each newsletter your group produces. Newsletters do get passed on to friends and colleagues. You can make it easy for potential new members to join if you provide them with the applications and contact information at a time when they might be considering joining.

Over time, consistent recruitment efforts will pay off with big dividends. Budget time and money for member recruitment—direct mail and other methods—and make it an ongoing priority.