

-- NOTES FROM --

**Texas Council of Chapters (TCC)
Membership and Chapter Development Workshop
Saturday, Feb 13, 2010
Tyler, TX**

Recruiting and Retaining Members

- **List why recruiting and retaining members in Chapters is such a challenge?**
- Dwindling target market as we are an “officers only” organization.
- Aging MOAA eligible population.
- Some Chapter locations have few military from which to draw.
- Lack of enthusiasm in Chapters to recruit new members.
- Other priorities in the Chapter and in members’ lives – don’t forget, we are volunteers.
- Today’s soldiers/officers are not “joining organizations” type people.
- Today’s active duty officers have many other family and professional priorities.
- Active duty PCS and frequent rotations.
- Potential members question “what do you offer?”
- Our programs at the local Chapter level are stale.
- Lack of hand-me-down information between new elected Chapter officers and the previous regime as recruiting and retention gets lost in the shuffle.
- It is not easy to sign-up new members. Not automated, paper intensive, slow to get on the mailing list and in the database, many confusing different levels of membership, etc.
- Lack of electronic communications – today’s potential members are driven by e-mail, texting, twittering, social networking, etc – not snail mail. Even e-mail is not the preferred mode of communications by the younger generation.
- E-mail overload – our message gets lost in the volume.
- Our e-mails get spammed out.
- Lack of personal reward – or at least the perception of no value – for the “what is in it for me” generation.
- Competition from other similar organizations.
- Plagued by the “Vietnam Attitude” – don’t want to get involved.

□ **What can we do about these challenges? Solutions?**

- Chapters should not try to be something they are not, i.e., some are purely social, some are community service minded, some are legislative focused, etc. All are good – play to your strengths when recruiting and retaining.
- Function as a business (follow the Tyler Rose Capital model) – join the Chamber of Commerce; act as a business; be involved in business expos and functions; be an active community partner; advertise in Workforce Newsletters, Veteran Service publications, community newspapers – all for free; be in the community parades.
- Play to one of our greatest strengths, i.e., emphasize that MOAA advocates for “all military” – not just officers.
- Work hard to “brand” the MOAA name in the community. [*Note: “Branding” is the art of becoming knowable, likable and trustable.*]
- Get behind a cause and collaborate through outreach to other “Military” organizations (AUSA, AFA, American Legion, VFW, etc.) and join in together on projects and events to help get the MOAA name and brand out there.
- Simplify and streamline the membership process through credit card processing at National MOAA with the pass through \$\$\$ back to the Chapters.
- Get people interested in and rally around a cause, i.e., legislative, community service, etc.
- Have a strong newsletter – paper and electronic.
- Have a TOPS (The Officer Placement Service) officer in the Chapter – a great way to get career transitioning officers interested in MOAA and your Chapter.
- Have a Telephone Committee to make calls to get people to come to meetings and events, etc.
- Have a Buddy Program to work one-on-one recruiting of new members.
- Offer free automatic Chapter membership for the first year – make up the revenue shortfall through other non-dues revenue activities.
- Utilize National’s offer to e-mail blast out a membership recruitment message (twice a year) from your Chapter to all National MOAA members living in your area who are not Chapter members.
- Overcome the stigma that “your Chapter is a best kept secret.”
- Have inspiring programs at your lunch and dinner meeting.
- Regularly visit to www.moaa.org -- it is a wealth of information.
- Use your “spouse and auxiliary network” to recruit new members.

- Work with your local Veteran Service Office/Officers (every Texas county has one) to help veterans and potential members.
- Focus recruitment efforts on the National Guard and Reserve units.
- Hook up with the Texas Land Board and the Texas Veterans Commission – great way to collaborate and brand your MOAA name.
- Collaborate with and get to know your fellow Texas Chapters and exchange ideas – visit www.texas-moaa.org for the Chapter Locator and contact info. Visit their websites.
- Have a Chapter Speakers Bureau and talk to local organizations, i.e., Officers Spouses Club at local installation, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.
- Invite potential new members to your staff and board meetings.

Generating Non-Dues Revenue

□ **List your ideas to initiate and increase non-dues revenue for the Chapter?**

- Check out these MOAA links for valuable information on non-dues revenue information. Click on:
 - http://www.moaa.org/comm/comm_Chapters/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter_initiatives/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter_initiatives_organization/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter_initiatives_organization_income.htm
 - http://www.moaa.org/comm/comm_Chapters/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter_initiatives/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter_initiatives_organization/comm_Chapters_yroftheChapter_initiatives_organization_advertising.htm
- Do 50-50's (where legal).
- Conduct raffles and drawings (where legal).
- Get companies to advertise in your newsletter and on your website.
- Have your website “link” to a sponsor’s website and charge sponsors for this added service/feature.
- Sell corporate partnerships, i.e., Alamo Chapter is doing this -- for \$100-\$150 a year a company gets listed in the newsletter and on the website and gets signage and recognition at all events. It is a “feel good” partnership on the company’s part and they don’t expect much more for their small donation.
- Conduct golf tournaments to raise funds for a cause, i.e., your scholarship fund. Great for “branding” your Chapter name in the community, cultivating your sponsors and recruiting new members. Heart of Texas Chapter does a great job at golf tournaments.
- Have your Chapter sponsor a dinner or “feed” and invite the local community. Add a few dollars to the dinner ticket for Chapter overhead/operations. Raffle off donated gifts from the community.
- At your events – “pass the hat or jar.”

- Conduct a garage sale.
- Sell MOAA/Chapter logo'd merchandise to your members with a built in profit margin.
- When sending out renewal notices for membership dues to your members add a line for soliciting contributions for your scholarship funds, operations, etc. Alamo Chapter does this with surprising success – it is a low effort and no brainer way to get additional funding.

Community Involvement

□ **List your ideas on how Chapters can have more visibility and impact in their local communities and area?**

- Build positive relationships with local TV stations and newspapers.
- Send BCC (Blind Copy) e-mails to non-member, local community officials on MOAA items of interest -- Wichita Falls Chapter “cuts and pastes” some of the National MOAA legislative, etc. information and redistributes to these officials as a courtesy – great promotion opportunity.
- Volunteer on local public TV to answer phones when they have telethons to raise money – wear your MOAA attire, etc. – another great way to “brand” your Chapter.
- Be a “go-to” resource for local legislators and politicians on veterans issues – build a relationship so they are comfortable contacting you.
- Seek out and build a relationship with veteran’s organizations in your area.
- Establish a Speakers Bureau and tap into the multi-talents and backgrounds of your members to speak out in the community.
- Work with your local recruiters to swear-in new recruits.
- Have a Chapter website!
- If the Vietnam travelling memorial comes through your area – get involved!
- Sponsor an “award” to give out in the local community.
- Advertise or submit articles in the community, base, etc. newspapers – normally is free and they are looking for something publish.
- Have MOAA/Chapter logo'd attire and wear at community events.
- Advertise for free in homeowners association newsletters.
- Be in the local parade.
- Volunteer to staff community activities and events.

□ **Future Workshop topics:**

- Helpful hints to better prepare for the “Military Officers Advocating in Austin (MOAA)” legislative efforts in January 2011 with presentations by a state legislator and a representative from the Texas Veterans Coalition.
- How to improve programs at Chapter lunch and dinner meetings to draw better attendance.