

Section

9 Membership

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*“Membership development
begins with **ME.**”*

— Sheryl Borden and Myrna Knapp,

1999 – 2001 Membership Development Chairmen —

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

As the president of your Altrusa group it is important that you understand the membership process and your role in it. No one expects you to recruit all of the new members during your year as president; however, as the president, you are the head “*cheer-leader*” in the process. Membership requires constant attention by you and by the Membership Development Committee.

The International Long Range/Strategic Plan (LRSP) indicates an international goal to “maximize membership growth.” Essentially this has to happen at the club level. As president, you need to be familiar with the LRSP and the objectives related to membership.

The International objectives are

- To increase the number of members by 1% by 2007
- To increase the number of clubs to 500 by 2007
- To increase the number of clubs-at-large to 20 by 2007
- To increase the percentage of members renewing membership to 95% by 2007.
- To decrease the number of clubs under charter strength to 110 by 2007.

Can we do it?

Yes, but it will take every club working on membership to reach these objectives. Clubs must write their own goals, objectives, and yearly action plan keeping in mind Altrusa International’s plan. After all membership growth begins with the clubs.

Review these frequently asked questions (FAQs) to hone your membership skills.

Where do I learn about membership procedures?

The best sources of information concerning membership are the *ByLaws and Policy Manual*, the *Altrusa Encyclopedia*, and the *Classification Guide*—in that order. Become familiar with the pertinent sections and advise your membership development chair to do the same.

Who sponsors new members?

It is the responsibility of **every Altrusan** to seek out and to sponsor new members **continually**. Finding prospective members should be top priority of every Altrusa club **each year**.

Why are members important?

- To staff and contribute to service
- To develop lasting friendships
- To offer diversity for networking
- To foster new leadership
- To extend new club building

How large should a club be?

Grow until you can form two clubs—that’s new club building at its best.

Where do we look for members?

- Chamber of Commerce
- Newspaper: business section and articles
- Daily professional contacts and business contacts
- Major companies
- Employers and personnel directors
- Meetings: church, business seminars, etc.
- Social contacts and friends
- Your business suppliers
- Other

Who is responsible?

Membership is the responsibility of every Altrusan—not just the Membership Development Committee. The committee is responsible for designing a program each year that involves all the members, but it is up to each and every Altrusan to achieve the membership goals.

How do we plan for growth?

Growth takes time, patience, and planning. Your club needs a goal in the club’s strategic plan that deals with the various aspects of membership: growth, retention, revitalization, and orientation. Consider such activities as:

- A membership function
- A membership contest
- Highlighting certain unfilled classifications at meetings—ask for names of members who will follow-up and make contact with potential members.
- Distribute Member Recommendation forms at each meeting.

Membership does not just happen—it takes planning and work.

How does new club building fit into membership?

New club building is an important part of our membership goals and objectives. It is one way Altrusa can grow and become better known in all communities. At the time your club is doing its yearly planning, expansion into a community near you should be high on your list of items to discuss. Without every club researching the possibility of a “new club building project” and taking on such a project, overall growth in Altrusa will be slow. Ask your club to examine these efforts.

For more information order the *New Club Building Guide* from the International office.

What is my role in ASTRA?

As club president your role is again a supportive one. As the teenage and young adult program sponsored by Altrusa, ASTRA is a very important part of our membership program. A successful and satisfying experience in ASTRA can lead eventually to Altrusa membership.

Study the ASTRA section in the *Encyclopedia* to get a better idea of the organization. If your club does not sponsor an ASTRA club, make sure it is discussed at your planning meeting. You might be the spark that ignites an ASTRA club in your community.

For additional information, contact the International Office or your District ASTRA Chair.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Top ten reasons why people don't volunteer

- 10) They don't have time.
- 9) They aren't interested in the work or projects offered.
- 8) They are afraid of getting committed to more than they bargained for.
- 7) The costs are too high. (Not the dues!)
- 6) They are very different from those involved.
- 5) They dislike the people involved.
- 4) They feel inadequate or unskilled.
- 3) There are "institutional obstacles" in the way.
- 2) They never heard of Altrusa International or the local club.

#1 reason why

- 1) **They weren't asked!** Or more accurately, they don't feel they were asked!

And a dozen reasons why they do

- 1) Help others
- 2) Gain work experience or entry to the job market
- 3) Use untapped educational skills
- 4) Meet new people
- 5) Make professional contacts
- 6) Build self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-esteem
- 7) Put hobby to good purpose
- 8) Fulfill a tradition
- 9) Fulfill a sense of duty
- 10) Learn new skills
- 11) Gain power and influence
- 12) **To give back!**

Altrusa's function is to find that sense of need in new members and fill the void.

Recruitment strategies for the new club year

The members of the Membership Development and Training Committee need to spend time planning their membership endeavors for the new year. All clubs need to look at membership as a year round priority of every member, not just the committee. Recruitment must be planned, continuous, resolute, and comprehensive.

Every Altrusa club would benefit by having more members. The Membership Committee must take the time to develop strategies, design or bring up-to-date recruitment materials, and coordinate formal recruitment efforts. Look at these suggested strategies to determine if they fit your club:

- **Analyze your recruitment efforts from the previous club year.** Were they successful? What changes needed to be made or efforts enhanced?
- **Identify missed opportunities.** Have you and your members connected with potential members in every venue? What about the gym, neighbors, etc.?
- **Examine recruitment materials.** When were they last updated? Do you have a local club brochure? Have you ordered recruitment materials from the International office?
- **Develop a specific target goal.** Is it realistic and are the objectives measurable? Is membership a major goal in your club's strategic plan? Are you cognizant of the objectives laid out in the plan? Have you reminded your members of their responsibility to the objectives. Does one year build on another?
- **Develop incentives.** Have you considered dividing your club into groups and developing a membership game to stimulate recruitment? Offer a real incentive to win—perhaps dinner for two or a salon visit.
- **Conduct a mini-brainstorming session with your club.** Gather members into small groups after a meeting to make lists of potential members, then send pairs of members out to make contacts. The “buddy system” builds confidence.
- **Extend a hand to former members to rejoin.** Have you contacted previous members recently? They might have time now to rejoin and benefit from their Altrusa membership.
- **Share the names of members who are moving with another club.** It is important that we keep members in Altrusa. Your club is always sorry to lose a member, however, giving the gift of continued membership in Altrusa, is one of the greatest gifts you can give a member who is moving. If member is moving to an area where there are no clubs, encourage her/him to become an Affiliate Member in order to keep the Altrusa connection.
- **Finally, don't forget to simply ask others to join your club.** Remember the major reason given by persons for not joining is that “they were not asked.”

The recruitment of new members is a continual process that continues from one year to another. Larger clubs mean greater service in your community and a fresh approach to service by your club. Try using the sheet on the following page as part of your annual membership program.

Forty potential members in four minutes

Use this form as part of a membership program. Make copies of this form and ask each member to fill it out with their own name on top. Collect the forms and make copies. Give the original back to the member. Now ask your members to begin contacting potential members from their list. Good luck!

Forty Potential Members in Four Minutes	
Write four names under each category. Member Name: _____	
Relatives	Friends
Co-workers	Partner's co-workers
School friends/teachers/day care	Places you do business (bank, dentist, etc.)
Church and social contacts	Neighbors
Contacts through children	People in other organizations with you

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

Many women and men become members of Altrusa but never **become** Altrusans.

Remember me?

I'm the one you asked to become a member.

I'm the one who paid dues to become a member, and stood up in front of all of you and promised to be a good member.

I'm the one who has come to every meeting since that time, but no one paid any attention to me. I tried several times to be friendly to some other members, but they all had their "buddies" to talk with and sit next to.

I sat down along with some unfamiliar faces several times, but they didn't pay much attention to me. I hoped very much that somebody would ask me to take charge of the last fund-raising project, but no one asked. I wanted very much to do the job, but no one saw my hand when I volunteered.

I missed my first meeting since becoming a member when my husband was sick. I could not make it, but no one asked me at the next meeting where I was. Gosh, I guess it didn't matter very much to the others whether I was there or not.

The next meeting I decided to stay home and watch a good program on TV. The following meeting, I attended. No one asked where I was the week before. You might say I am a nice person, love my family, hold a responsible job, and serve my community. You know who else I am? I'm the one who never came back.

It amuses me when I think back on how the president and several members were discussing why the club was losing members. It amuses me that they spent so much time looking for new members when I was there all the time. All they needed to do was to make me feel wanted, needed, and welcome.

I'm the one who never came back.

— *The Altrusa Scanner*, Fostoria, Ohio —

This article probably expresses all of the problems related to retention better than a list can. It has real impact relating our roles as Altrusans in retaining members. It also expresses the expectations of a new member. The next section includes frequently asked questions, retention problems and solutions, and an agenda for a new member orientation. Use these tools to achieve that 95% retention goal.

When does retention begin?

Retention begins at the very moment we decide to pursue a prospective member. Our success in bringing that prospect into Altrusa starts a process that continues throughout the life of the membership of that individual.

Who is responsible for retention?

Everyone! Retention should be a part of every phase of the operation. It should be in development, planning, and working on committees—service and fund raising

What is the greatest need a member has?

Members need to know. Altrusans need orientation, re-orientation, and project orientation by committee chairmen. The more members know about a subject, the more likely they will remain active.

How do we keep current?

Through newsletters, sharing of information from the International organization, re-orientation, and announcements at meetings.

Why take the time for re-orientation?

We all forget the little details. It is impossible to remember everything about Altrusa at one orientation session. Encourage your Membership Development Committee to plan a re-orientation once a year. Here are a couple suggestions.

- Prepare a game. Make the re-orientation fun. Try Altrusa Bingo available on the Altrusa web site or design your own Altrusa Jeopardy or Trivial Pursuit game.
- Place a short information sheet or a even a quiz in front of each member once a month. If time does not allow for an explanation, have the answers on the back.

Retention is **orientation**.

Retention is **assimilation**.

Retention is the **opportunity to get involved**.

Retention is **participation**.

Retention is **satisfaction** in a job well done.

Why we lost them

Problem	Solution
Member did nothing	Put everyone to work immediately — paramount to new members.
We don't know why they became a member	Find out their expectations and assist in meeting them.
Members don't understand Altrusa	New member orientation needed.
Delinquent dues	Follow-up personally when ten days past due. Don't allow delinquencies to continue.
Too busy	Sometimes an excuse for another problem, but discuss it with the member. If truly too busy, invite her/him to return to the club when time allows. or take a leave of absence.
Poor programs	What does she/he want? Ask her/him to talk with the program chairman or join the program committee. Do others share this view? If so, make needed changes.
Poor meeting structure	Review <i>Point of Order</i> and <i>The Altrusa Encyclopedia, Newly Revised</i> . Identify weaknesses and make changes.
Expectations	Evaluate expectations of club members; take action on discrepancies where possible
Poor communications	Occasionally devote a meeting to a discussion of problems in this area.
Member moving to...	Send the member off with best wishes and inform the Altrusa club in the new location. If no club exists in the new community, suggest that she/he build one after getting settled and encourage them to continue as an Affiliate member.
Lack of pride	As a club, discuss why. Improve quality of service projects, fellowship, fund raisers.
No sense of belonging	Improve fellowship; get members involved.
No goals or direction	Goals must be set. Insist they be realistic, measureable, and aggressively pursued. Involve members in determining and achieving goals.
Unclear expectations	Increase verbal and written communications. Improve new member orientation.
No challenge	Evaluate types of projects which members are working on. Put members to work. Increase or change projects.

— From the *International Altrusan* —

New member orientation Use this agenda as a starting point to develop a new member orientation.

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- What is Altrusa?**
- Brief history of Altrusa
 - Date first Altrusa club organized—April 11, 1917, Nashville, Tennessee, USA
 - Philosophy and goals of Altrusa
 - Organizational structure—International, District and local club
 - Altrusa Foundation
 - Show the video *This is Altrusa International*, if you have a copy

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- What are the responsibilities of membership?**
- Financial obligations
 - Service commitment
 - Attendance requirements
 - Explain the classification system

-
- Local club activities**
- Schedule of club meetings
 - Service projects—present, future, and past

-
- Local club standing committees**
- Introduce standing committee chairs and have them give a brief explanation.
- Service
 - Membership Development
 - Communications
 - Finances
 - Nominating

Special committees of local club

Review how each of these committees fits into the club.

Fund raising activities

Discuss each members responsibility to the fund raising efforts.

Allow time for questions from the new members.

If you prefer to cover the local club information first, do so; if there is too much information for one session, try two one-hour sessions. The important thing is that new members understand the organization they have become members of.

CLUB BUILDING—REVITALIZATION

What is revitalization?

Revitalization means new life in membership, leadership and service.

How do we begin?

Self-analysis is the beginning of revitalization.

Who is responsible?

Revitalization must be everyone's concern.

What will be the hardest part?

Accepting the challenge to make some changes!

Revitalization tips

- Survey the community needs and select a new service project.
- Join with another civic club or neighboring Altrusa club in a program, city event, or service project.
- Become a participating club in the Sister Club program and plan a major exchange of materials and project or program ideas.
- Become a resource for clubs in the District which are below charter strength.
- Make a concerted effort to increase attendance at District conferences and International conventions.
- Project a more professional image through the yearbook, newsletter, publicity, and personal business endeavors.
- Be willing to schedule exciting and unusual programs.
- Plan social events where members can easily get to know each other
- Approach orientation and re-orientation with new materials and ideas from another club or District.
- Keep your members informed.
- Accent the positive.

Member responsibilities for a strong club

- Participate beyond paying your dues; membership is more than monetary.
- Accept an office, if nominated. Be sure you are informed and understand the duties of the office.
- Attend as many meetings as possible to keep abreast of current and new projects.
- Initiate new ideas and undertake the action required to bring the idea to fruition.
- Keep informed by reading all publications from District and International. Your dues make these publications possible.

Every member must commit to successful revitalization.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS

While the International board made membership building a priority, retaining our current members is always important. Altrusa loses a fair number of members through moves. This should not be the case. If we follow some simple steps, Altrusa can keep most of its members who relocate.

Follow these steps when a member moves

- Be sure to get her/his new address!
- Have the treasurer include the member's new address on the deletion form that is sent to International and the District.
- Check to see if there is an Altrusa club in the area where your member is moving.
- If there is a club in that area, write to the president and inform her/him that one of your members is moving to the area. Tell the president about your member. Give her/him your members address, etc.
- If there is not a club in that area, inform International of that fact and enclose the member's new address. The International office will send information on **affiliate membership** to that person.

When a member of another club relocates to your area

- It is hoped that you have received a letter of introduction from another club president telling you that one of their members has moved into your community.
- Immediately contact and invite that person to attend an Altrusa event or meeting.
- Send some of your Altrusans to visit shortly after she/he arrives. Your members should be instrumental in making the new arrival feel welcome.

National trends show that people now move and relocate for work reasons more than ever, especially younger people. Sadly for Altrusa, we lose mostly younger members through moves. Our younger members are the future of Altrusa International. Let's keep each other informed when members move and we should be able to keep more members!

Rev. 5/90

MEMBERSHIP FORMS

The Membership Recommendation Form and the Emeritus Information Form on the upcoming pages may be copied to use as needed or check the International web site (www.altrusa.com) in order to download this information.

MEMBER REFERRAL FORM
(for Altrusa clubs to complete when a member moves away)

TO: CLUB PRESIDENT OR DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHAIRMAN

FROM: ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL, INC., OF _____

DATE: _____

Purpose: The following member of our club is moving to your area and would like to continue as an Altrusan. Please contact this individual about membership in your club or District.

For District Membership Development chairmen only: We have sent this form to you because we are unsure whether there is a club in this member's area. Please contact the appropriate club if applicable. Otherwise please recommend this individual for affiliate membership.

Following is the information we have available regarding this member:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov.: _____ Postal code: _____

Country: _____

E-Mail: _____

Telephone (B) _____ (H) _____

Classification: _____

Comments and/or special achievements: _____

Completed by _____ at Altrusa International, Inc., of _____
Telephone: (H) _____ (B) _____
Mailed to: District _____ or Club _____

If you need address information for a club president or District Membership Development chair, please consult your directory or contact Altrusa International, Inc. at 332 S. Michigan Ave., Ste. 1123, Chicago, IL 60604, U.S.A. 312/427-4410 or email altrusa@altrusa.com.

Request for Approval of Emeritus Membership Status Districts One through Fifteen

Emeritus membership is an honor that may be conferred on Active and Active Retired members who have been Altrusans for at least ten (10) years and who are deserving of recognition because of their history of service to Altrusa and their devotion to its principles.

Eligible Altrusans are those members who are exemplary in their contributions to Altrusa, but who due to age, infirmities, or disabilities cannot continue as active participants in their clubs.

Emeritus membership status must be approved by both the member's local Altrusa club and by the District Board of Directors. The club must forward a request for approval of Emeritus membership status to the District Governor, who will expedite the request at the next District board meeting.

An Emeritus member can be returned to Active status upon notification to the club that she or he is able to participate again as an active member.

To request Emeritus Membership approval, complete this form and send it to your district governor.

Member name _____

Mailing address _____

Number of years of membership in Altrusa _____

Briefly describe the condition which restricts this member's ability to actively participate in Altrusa:

Briefly describe this member's service and contributions to Altrusa and to the community:

Submitted by Altrusa International, Inc., of _____

Signature of club president _____ Date submitted _____

Signature of district governor _____ Date approved _____

*Distribution of approved Emeritus Membership Requests:
Original copy to requesting Altrusa club, copy to Altrusa International and copy for District files*

Recommendation for Membership

To be completed by the sponsors (please print or type)

Name _____

Home address _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode/postal code _____

Home phone () _____ Business phone () _____

E-mail address _____

Firm, corporation or organization _____

Business Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode/postal code _____

Title or position _____

Description of responsibilities _____

Nature of business or profession _____

Club or organization affiliations (include leadership positions held) _____

Additional remarks _____

Date _____ Sponsor _____

Sponsor _____

Signatures of two active or active-retired members

To be completed by Membership/Classification Chair (please print or type)

Is the proposed individual eligible for membership? _____

Classification _____

Is it currently _____ filled? _____ open?

Date _____ Approved by _____

Signature of membership/classification chair

Approved _____ Rejected _____ Reason _____
Date Date Date

Invitation Issued _____ Accepted _____ Declined _____
Date Date Date

Reason invitation declined _____

Dues/Fees paid (date) _____

Membership Activity Record

Name: _____ Date initiated: _____

Birthday: _____ If married, spouse's name: _____

Club participation

Year	Committee	Member	Chair	Officer	Board member
Year	Special recognition outside of Altrusa (brief description)				

District participation

Year	Committee	Member	Chair	Officer	Board member
Year	Attendance at conference				
Year	Delegate	Alternate	Attendee	Presenter	

International participation

Year	Committee	Member	Chair	Officer
Year	Attendance at convention			
Year	Delegate	Alternate	Attendee	Presenter