

There are several steps in recruiting SCA members. Each one is critical in the recruitment process and in keeping active, contributing members. I will detail each process in order:

### **1.) Identify your target population**

A target population can be more specific than just your local city, state or country. Your target population may be identified by ethnicity, culture, age, or socioeconomic status. Your current group may be comprised of college students, or older SCA members. You first need to decide who you want to recruit and/or what types of people you can recruit.

**a.) Who are you looking for?** If your group is located in a college town, you may be interested in recruiting college students. College students have traditionally been a good source for the SCA to gain new members. Rural and urban areas may seek out cultural or historic groups. Suburban areas may want to focus more on families.

**b.) Where do we look for our target population?** College student hangouts include coffee houses, comic book and used book stores, libraries, laundromats, dance clubs, etc. These may all be good areas to put up flyers, do demos, or promote your SCA activities. Rural and urban areas may include churches and civic centers, or you could become involved with community activities, parades, festivals, and so on. In addition to those locations, suburban areas may focus on sporting groups, Boy scouts and/or Girl Scouts. Exposing these groups to the SCA, doing demos and educational classes only help to increase awareness about the SCA and medieval life.

### **2.) Demos, networking, and public relations**

**a.) Public awareness.** Demos are very important in creating SCA awareness. They can be a tactile representation of our Society and give a “realness” that a flyer or poster cannot. After all, we encourage participation in our Society. We don’t want our audience to just be entertained; we want them to be involved. Having demos allows your audience to touch, see, and interact with our equipment and people. They can ask questions and cheer their favorite fighter on the list. Having the right kind of demo is almost as important as having a demo at all. The right kind of demo can bring you new members; the wrong kind of demo can give you a bad name in your community.

**i. Who should talk at a demo?** This is a great time for your knowledgeable members to talk about the SCA and what a great group it can be. They should always be positive. Never tell stories that talk about fighters who “rhinohide” or bad Tuchux stories. If you are recruiting college students, talking about youth activities is probably not appropriate. Brewing and vintning, armored combat and dancing may be better topics. If you are recruiting families, telling stories of drunken debauchery is not good. Again—identify your population and relate to their interests.

**ii. When should we do demos?** Most SCA groups recruit sporadically when there is a great need. They will go through a time when their older members are burned out and new members are scarce. The group will do

#### Midrealm Pale Articles

SCA Recruitment Part I - “Target Population” (October 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part II - “Demos, Networking, and Public relations” (November 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part III - “Promoting the SCA to Newcomers” (December 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part IV - “Retaining SCA Newcomers and Members” (January 2008)

a series of demos that brings in a lot of new members but will only hold on to a few because there aren't enough resources to help them all. Then the group will settle back into a comfort zone until the next time this happens. This is not the way to increase your group's numbers and maintain a healthy SCA group. Regular demos held throughout the year are always better. Become involved with a local community activity where people expect you and count on seeing you. If you recruit all year long, you should receive more members in smaller quantities, which your group should assimilate more easily.

**iii. What should we do at a demo?** The first thing you do is take stock of the resources within your group. Do you have fighters, artisans, archers, dancers, etc.? Draw on your group's talents and make sure they are represented. Hold a mock tourney, have an arts and sciences display, perform a dance or a play. Use whatever you can to bring your audience's attention. While the fighters do their combat, explain how our combat works, the rules, who is a knight, a squire, how everything relates. Heraldry and pageantry are very important. Have banners, medieval pavilions, videos, pictures, etc. Have a newcomer table, with a sign-up sheet for more information, flyers, coloring pages for kids, and so forth. One innovative technique gives coupons out for free admittance to your next local event. Find ways to draw your new recruits into more activities. Give them something they can put in their hand and take home.

**b.) Networking.** Your current members are the most powerful recruiters you can find. They have decided to be active in the SCA and something about our organization keeps them active. They are the best testament to our organization and should be actively recruiting new members. If each member brings in just one new member, you have doubled your group size.

**c.) Public Relations.** Partnering with your community is very important. Whether it is your local schools, churches, or city organizations (i.e. libraries), these groups represent the community you live in.

### **3.) I did a demo, now what?**

Hopefully at your demo you had a sign-up sheet. Now you need to follow up, within a few days. Modern life has many distractions and you want your demo to still be fresh in their minds when you call. These people are very important. The people who signed up on your list at least had enough interest to take the extra time and place some of their personal information on a piece of paper. Strike while the iron's hot!

**a.) 2nd Tier info packet.** The demo visitor made the first step in becoming a new member. Now you need to be a hospitable host and provide more information. Send them a small packet of information about your local group, the meetings, classes, and calendar of events. Maybe a list of what they should bring to their first event or a glossary of some of our unique terminology. This is a time to give them just little more info to make us seem interesting, but not too much to overwhelm.

**b.) Welcome to the SCA class.** Always have a welcome class scheduled. You do not want to tell them that you will get back to them or you have no idea when

#### Midrealm Pale Articles

SCA Recruitment Part I - "Target Population" (October 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part II - "Demos, Networking, and Public relations" (November 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part III - "Promoting the SCA to Newcomers" (December 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part IV - "Retaining SCA Newcomers and Members" (January 2008)

a class will meet. Remember—you are a professional organization and need to appear professional and competent. This event does not have to be a structured lecture class. Some groups have a newcomer gathering, a newcomer's feast, or a social function to just welcome new people. But, it should NOT be your business meeting. It needs to be an event where the focus is on the new people you are hoping to recruit.

#### **4.) I brought them in, now I'm done!**

No! Your work has just begun. You can recruit new members all day, but if no one stays, you have wasted your efforts. You need to invest some time and efforts into making an environment that will educate your new people and create a place for them in your organization.

**a.) Newcomer classes.** Create a curriculum of classes for your new people. Heraldry, persona, costuming, protocol, SCA History 101 and a history of your local group are good starting classes.

**b.) Mentoring programs.** Mentoring programs are very important. After having your SCA 101 class, have a question and answer session about what might interest your new people. Do they want to be fighters? archers? artisans? officers? Use experienced SCA members who are good at helping new people find their direction and have them mentor the newcomers in those areas. Some groups even develop a "newcomer household" that lets their new people feel included until they decide where they want to be or who they will want to associate with. Have duties at events where new people can volunteer, participate, and get a positive result. Remember, you want them to return!

**c.) Gold Key (loaner items).** Is your Gold Key able to support these new people? Do you have plain T-tunics, feast gear, and other items that will help your new people feel a part of the medieval experience?

Each group needs to customize its recruitment program for itself. But if you follow the basic steps outlined above, you should have a good foundation for your recruiting activities.

In Service,

Kyppyn Kirkcaldy, KSCA

*Copyright ©2000 - 2008 Kipp Martines. The author of these works retains full copyright for this written material. Permission is granted to make and distribute verbatim copies of these documents for non-commercial private educational purposes provided the author's name is preserved on all copies. If you wish to use these articles on your personal or official SCA website, please send the author a link to your site. Questions and comments can be directed to [syrkyppyn@paragonkeep.com](mailto:syrkyppyn@paragonkeep.com).*

#### Midrealm Pale Articles

SCA Recruitment Part I - "Target Population" (October 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part II - "Demos, Networking, and Public relations" (November 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part III - "Promoting the SCA to Newcomers" (December 2007)

SCA Recruitment Part IV - "Retaining SCA Newcomers and Members" (January 2008)