

Growing Membership

We all know that there is no single silver bullet when it comes to growing membership. *It will always take a combination of measures to achieve success.*

- **Form a Membership (Recruitment & Retention) Sub-Committee** ...or have at the very least, one person dedicated to this area.
- in many Clubs, this role can be just as important as the Treasurer's role as growing and or maintaining membership is vital to a Club's financial viability
- **Dedicate some of your annual budget to recruitment initiatives**
- Too often, we can be consumed by only budgeting for our current members and quarantine very little for attracting new members
- **Define your membership targets** – how many members would you like and what type/age/gender of members.
- The desired types (bowling, social etc.) and ages of members you are aiming to attract will guide which of the following ideas may be more appropriate.
- **Visit your local retirement village or Over-55/60/65 complex** and ask to address residents during one of their weekly social gatherings to make them aware of your Club.
- **Offer incentives to current members to join new members**
- Whatever small amount of income that is forgone initially could be made up multiple times if each new member plays for a few years or more - examples could include half-priced membership for those current members that introduce a brand-new bowler ...or running an annual competition with a prize attached for current members that attract the newest members.
- **Look at when your local Council/Community is holding community events** and see if you can tie in an open/fun session with those events and benefit from the free publicity that may be provided.
- **Have a functional website** (with key searchable words / metatags)
The days of new members finding your Club in the yellow/white pages are well and truly gone – if your Club doesn't have a web presence or some form of social media presence, then it may as well be covered in an invisibility cloak.
- Similarly, if **you are a member of a community club** and the club has a periodical magazine or e-mails their members, see if an attractive notice about Probus can be included regularly ...and if the club has a has a newsletter/website, ask if a link can be included in the e-mails or magazines.
- **Have a regularly updated Facebook page** - like it or not, Facebook is the current-day 'newsletter' – more potential new members are using Facebook than you would imagine ...remember the days when not many members had a mobile phone?

- **Have a stand in a shopping centre handing out flyers to try Probus at your Club** - most shopping centres will offer a discounted rate to Clubs/not-for-profits to hire some space for a day.
- **Invest in some reusable roadside banners with appropriate text/pictures** - don't overuse or leave up for too long as it can lessen the impact – generally use in the lead up to meetings/events.
- **Set up a stand at local fetes.**
- **Set up a stand at Council or Community Festivals.**
- **Set up a stand at your local polling place on election days.**
- **Place flyers on community notice boards** (shopping centres, libraries, Bunnings, community centres etc.).
- **Write a story occasionally for your local newspaper** – remind the community you're there and doing good things.
- **Invite members of your local Council (or State/ Federal MP) and their staff** to your Probus meeting or outing – it could also be a great networking opportunity ...these connections could be handy for future grant applications.
- **Approach your local community radio station** and offer to spruik Probus as a great social activity, its physical and mental health benefits and a great way to make new friends.
- **Going one step further...** if you start a discussion with your local community radio station, **see if you can have regular Probus news/updates added to their program** – offer to send them some copy they can read out or perhaps even offer to be a volunteer presenter.
- **Consider offering a trial membership category** (for a certain period e.g., three months), that allows potential full members to 'try before they buy' – this may be a reduced monthly membership amount and/or reduced Club fees
- **Advertising in a local newspaper.**
- **Distribute flyers via letter box drops** - These last two ideas are less effective than they used to be but can still work in some areas.
- **Word of mouth (in general)** – arguably the best form of promotion – **encourage your members to discuss Probus and your Club with their non-Probus friends.**
- **Hold some dedicated social events a few times each year to get Club members to bring new members to the Club** and strengthen member friendships.