

HOW TO ORGANIZE AND CARRY OUT A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER RECRUITMENT

It's no secret that the number of men joining fraternities has decreased on a majority of college campuses. Therefore, we must make sure that we are working on a strategy that will keep us competitive and successful. One of the biggest recruitment opportunities is the summertime. However, we tend to view the summer months as a break rather than time to get real work accomplished.

Today's college man is not necessarily the same as he has been in the past. The key is to change with the times. It would be safe to say that most men do not plan on joining a fraternity when they come to college. Just ask for a show of hands at your next chapter meeting! Potential members are not going to simply show up at the door. Therefore, we must first convince them to go Greek, and then to join Delta Chi.

Most chapter members who are reading this now ask the all-important question, "Can we afford to recruit in the summer?" The cost of summer recruitment is completely up to the chapter members. The men in your chapter could agree to create a

scholarship to be given to an incoming freshman, or, with some effective planning and a little help from parents and alumni, your recruiting effort could cost you next to nothing. The key to a successful summer recruitment program, like any recruitment effort, is the chapter's attitude and the amount of effort put into the program. If your chapter is short on resources (money or men or both!) try focusing on a particular metropolitan area or even a limited number of high schools in a tight geographical area. It would be nice to develop a couple of "pipeline" high schools that your chapter could use to supplement its other recruitment efforts.

Change does not come easily for any group, but after a few well-planned and well-executed summer recruitment campaigns, not having a summer recruitment program will seem like a thing of the past.

How do you recruit over the summer? Below is an outline of how to form a solid, summer recruitment program.

Plans for summer recruitment:

1. It is vital that the "C" develop a summer contact sheet for the chapter members. Even more so, the Recruitment Chair needs to develop recruitment teams. Make it a competition and provide incentives. For example, whichever team gets the most bids accepted gets some form of reward (i.e. dinner, a small reduction in dues, etc.).
2. Put together a booklet, full of information about Delta Chi, your university, your Greek community, and your chapter/colony, including a letter from the "A". Make sure that the recruitment booklet and the website have contact information for the Recruitment Chairman and the "A". They should also contain a list (with all necessary details) of all recruitment events.
3. Spruce up and enhance the chapter's website. Make sure that it "sells" the message the chapter has agreed it is going to sell in everything it does. Remove photos with inappropriate content and any inappropriate wording or references if they exist.
4. Some universities allow students to obtain mailing addresses for incoming freshmen. If available, go to the admissions office and get mailing labels/email addresses for all incoming freshmen. Check to see if the IFC office has a list of those expressing interest in going Greek. But don't focus exclusively on them. What percent of your current members had their names on such a list?
5. Send out the rush booklet to incoming freshmen. You may also be able to get a bulk-mailing rate from the post office.
6. After sending information out to incoming freshmen, follow up with a phone call. Cold-calling may not always be easy, but it is worth the effort. Per-

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sonal contact can make all the difference to a high school senior and his parents.

7. Organize the chapter/colony into teams by geographic location. These teams will be responsible for recruiting men in their geographic area, especially from their own high school! They should stay in contact as a team and with the Recruitment Chairman (who also needs to stay in touch with the "A").
8. Have recruitment teams hold area recruitment functions. There are most likely several members of the chapter from the closest metropolitan area. Organize a local recruitment function, inviting prospective members. It isn't going to eat up the chapter's entire budget to hold these functions. A chapter could simply hold a function at a park, or member's house, barbecuing and playing softball. If your chapter decides to put a fair amount of money into recruitment, ideas for recruitment functions may include any type of major sporting event, renting out a room at a restaurant, etc. No matter the cost, look at it as an investment. For those chapters/colonies that may have students coming in from all over the country, shift your efforts into a more individualized style of recruitment and regionalize when possible. Another resource to utilize in this aspect is the internet, using the chapter and international websites (www.deltachi.org). Make sure that your chapter's website is up to date, contains only appropriate material, and has a link on Delta Chi's website.
9. Follow up on any sort of contact you have with potential members during the summer. Send a handwritten thank you note after they have attended an event, and be sure to pick up the phone and personally thank them for taking time out of their summer.
10. Throughout the summer, form a spreadsheet of all potential members. This will keep things much more organized and manageable. It is also very important to keep good records on potential members. The Recruitment Chairmen will want to keep track of what events he has been to, what contact the chapter has had with him, who knows him the best, etc.

Sample Calendar for Summer Recruitment

March 21st-28th Recruitment teams should meet and plan out their summer activities. Invite area alumni to be

involved in this process. Plan two or three events. Discuss how to work with parents.

April 14th-21st Compile a list of freshmen from the university/college, recommendations from alumni, sororities, friends, and guidance counselors. Use this information to create a contact database split into groups by geographic regions, or even high schools.

May 14th-21st Send out an information packet prepared by the chapter to all potential members in your database. If you can't afford this then focus on an area, only those who have indicated an interest in going Greek, or sample a random selection and ask them to bring a friend.

May 25th-31st Have the recruitment teams make follow-up phone calls to all potential members who received information. The recruitment teams should talk up the summer game plan, and possibly answer any questions.

June 18th-24th Event One - Have a BBQ at an alumnus' or parents' house. Get a firm commitment from brothers and rush guests who will be attending. Follow up with a phone call to each man who attended and a phone call to all who were unable to attend. Personal contact is the key to successful personal recruitment.

July 1st-July 7th Event Two - Plan an outing to a sporting event such as a professional baseball game. Again, remember to follow up with some sort of personal contact to thank the men for taking the time to attend.

July 20th-26th Event Three - Have a get-together at a local park, or rent out a room at a local restaurant. Ask an alumnus to speak about Delta Chi. Use this time for a quick informational session and a short orientation to the university they will be attending in the fall. Finish with a question and answer session.

August 3rd- 9th Event Four- Have an event at school or at a chapter member's house. It is important to have prospective members meet the chapter/colony as a group so they know what type of organization they may be joining. This is also a great chance to get to see brothers who may have been working all summer.

As always, remember to follow up with some personal contact. Encourage them to go through rush/recruitment

in the fall, or simply let them know to get in touch with you when they arrive at school. Or, better yet, find out how you can get in touch with them! If appropriate have an event during the first week of school.

In addition, when holding an event, it is important to be prepared. Every area needs to be covered, such as dress for the occasion, location, time, what to bring, etc.

When Should the Recruiting Start?

All chapters/colonies should recruit 365 days a year. Too many groups rely on university-structured “rush weeks” and do little, if any, preparatory work during the summer. Getting ready for summer recruitment is not something that can be done mid-summer. In reality, preparation should begin shortly after spring break, if not before.

If a chapter/colony waits until the end of the semester, there will not be time to properly prepare the members of the chapter/colony for a solid summer recruitment effort. The chapter will want to be in a position where it is picking and choosing who it wants. Remember, recruitment is about quantity AND quality.

Ideas to Get Started on a Summer Recruitment Program:

- Talk to guidance counselors. Don't hesitate to go back to your old high school to see about the graduating seniors who will be attending your university.
- Utilize alumni! We often forget how important a resource alumni can be. Get them involved in planning summer recruitment. Have alumni assist you in all facets of summer recruitment, including planning or hosting events.
- Always remember that personal contact is the most proven recruitment technique.
- Potential members will be much more at ease if you meet them on their “own turf”. Being in a comfortable environment makes them much more open and accepting. This is also the perfect opportunity to impress the parents of a potential member in hopes of showing them the benefits of their son becoming a Delta Chi.
- Pay attention to the parents of potential members. Parents are often apprehensive about the idea of fraternity. Take some time to dispel the

myths of *Animal House* and the things that they hear about on television. This is an area where alumni support can be invaluable.

- Another great resource can be the parents of members. Parents may be willing to allow the use of their home as a location to hold summer recruitment functions. Such a gesture should not go overlooked by the chapter, so remember to offer help in setting up for the event and to show your appreciation after the function. It is also understood that behavior at these functions should be respectable before, during, and after the event.
- Remember the basic selling points of recruitment. You get what you recruit. For example, if you are talking to a prospective member solely about partying, don't expect that person to take on a huge leadership role. You will also see how retention and your recruitment sales pitch points tie in with each other.
- Involvement in other organizations is always beneficial to Delta Chi. For summer recruitment, you would like to have brothers involved in summer orientation, and programs directed at helping freshmen settle into their new surroundings. If they are not currently involved, this fall would be a great time to start working for next summer.
- In the chapter's alumni newsletter, develop a section where alumni can send in names of young high school men who will be attending the university. Recommendations could be sent via e-mail if you have an alumni list serve or chapter website. Alumni can also recommend current students who would make good members.
- Work as a team! When everyone is putting in a great deal of effort, the results are going to be that much better. Members cannot simply rely on just the Recruitment Chair to do the work. If brothers often feel that no one will miss their “small part” of the recruitment effort, eventually all the members will arrive at this same thought, and nothing will be accomplished. Lead by example as opposed to taking the easy way out.

Additional Thoughts on Summer Recruitment:

By setting goals and developing, implementing, and executing a well-run summer recruitment program, your chapter/colony will benefit in several ways. Considering the fact that most other fraternities do not have any

summer recruitment, the chapter will be able to get a jump on the competition. While the usual rivals from formal rush are waiting around for that “magic” two-week period in the fall, the men of your chapter will be forming the associate member class for the fall.

If Delta Chi is the first to contact the young men who will be attending the university/college, then Delta Chi will be able to select the highest quality potential members. The chapter will see the results from its hard work and will be able to enjoy its success. Overall, things will fall into place, and the chapter will improve in all areas of operation.

Again, the importance of inviting potential members must be reiterated. Everything you will need for a successful summer recruitment plan is in place. However, all of the hard work will amount to nothing if there is only planning and not contacting. Follow up and follow through with potential members! Remember that recruitment starts with going out and meeting people.

The biggest return on the investment of hard work in summer recruitment will be the enthusiasm of interested young freshmen when they first move into their dorms in the fall. They will be doing a form of “dorm storming” that the chapter would never be able to accomplish. The “buzz” will be all over campus, and you will have taken care of 80% of recruitment for the fall. Utilize the new guys, as they can be your best recruiters. Even more so, the chapter will find that once one guy decides to join, so do his friends.

Recruiting can be challenging, but remember that there are several things to help keep you motivated:

- Your chapter/colony will be an even stronger force on campus.
- There will be more brothers with whom you can establish friendships.
- More talented men to fill to critical leadership positions.
- With more members, the chapter will also be doing better financially. When the chapter is doing well financially, the chapter can have more programming (social events, scholarship, etc.)
- All in all, you will end up having a better experience!

*Editor's Note: For other ideas on recruitment, please look at the Recruitment **BRIEF** and the other material posted under the Recruitment Chair on www.deltachi.org*