

FEBRUARY 2012

Developing a Growth Strategy for your Evangelical Alliance

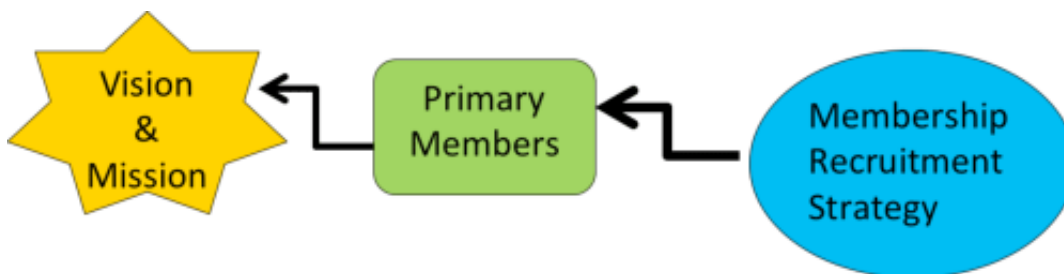
Membership Growth Is Critical for Every Association

The one thing churches and associations have in common is the need to grow. We fight natural attrition. Populations change, grow or diminish. People and organizations age, and pass on. Membership growth is the only way to fight a pernicious slow decline. If you don't plan to grow you stagnate.

This presents a very real challenge for Evangelical Alliances, especially Regional or Global Evangelical Alliances like the WEA and our Regional Evangelical Alliances, because our membership consists of national Evangelical Alliances of which there is a limited number. Furthermore, unlike a church, we cannot just go out there and evangelize to see converts coming into the fold. The creation of an Evangelical Alliance requires a process of gestation, the maturing of a vision, a prompting from the Spirit, and some transcending impulse that galvanizes a drive to form an E.A. That impulse might be an unexpected turn in national politics, a sudden festering of persecution, or a proposed legislation that would curtail the religious freedom of churches. On occasion, the impulse may be a vision for what God could do in a country when His people collaborate and work together. I think you get the picture. There are now 129 Evangelical Alliances around the world and we trust God will increase those numbers.

Focus On the Priorities

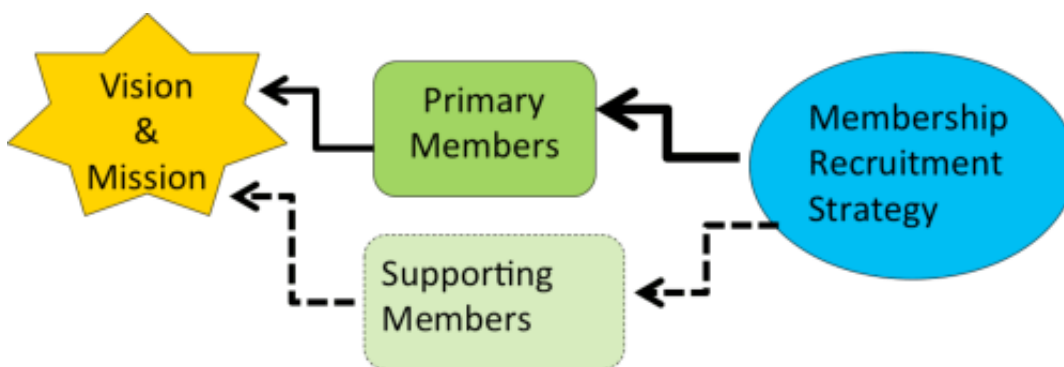
What "on the ground" difference can we make to increase the membership in our alliances or associations? John Pearson, in his lessons on Association Leadership Essentials (Part 1) reminds participants that membership growth must be clearly focused, but how do we know what our priorities are? Membership growth strategies need to be focussed on priorities and the top priority is to focus on your primary members. Normally, we can determine who fits the primary membership category by analyzing the vision and mission of the association. In other words, your membership recruitment strategy, when focussed on the primary members will lead you to fulfill your vision and mission. If this is not the case, something is amiss.



When membership growth has been lean, or when budgets are under stress, we might be tempted to drive growth by focussing on supporting membership categories. Supporting members are those that do not fit the primary membership category. See the membership pages at worlddea.org for more information about the WEA structure. The WEA maintains several supporting membership categories. These are:

- Alliances (Primary members)
 - National Alliances
 - Regional Alliances
- Global Partners (supporting members)
- Church Networks and Denominations (supporting members)
- Associates (supporting members)

Following John Pearson's analysis, and in consideration of the variety of membership categories in the WEA, the priority for membership growth should be focussed on National and Regional Alliances. The following diagram represents the subordinate position supporting members would hold in a well prioritized membership growth strategy.



5 Membership Growth Methodologies:

The Association Leadership Essentials lesson on membership growth presents five common methods for growing your association or alliance. These methods may undergird the philosophy and strategy for membership development in many associations.

1. Member-Get-a-Member

This method utilizes a strategy that mobilizes its membership to bring in new members. We are familiar with this strategy because many churches operate using this method in their evangelistic efforts. The member-get-a-member method can be very effective, but requires a highly motivated and well informed membership. Also, when a membership drive is everyone's responsibility, it tends to be no-one's. Associations that use this method develop systems to stimulate and reward effective membership recruitment. These incentives can take the form of reduced fees and other perks for star recruiters. The leadership of an alliance that uses this method needs to celebrate the efforts made by strong recruiters, featuring their stories and expressing appreciation for their efforts.

2. Director of Membership Development

This method for recruiting new members features a designated person – usually a staff position – that is tasked with the responsibility of developing new members. The advantage of this method is that a qualified and skilled person can implement a focused strategy. Finding this person can be a challenge, especially if it is a volunteer position, as it may well be in smaller associations and alliances. Leaders of alliances will find ways to reward strong performance and success in recruiting new members.

3. Membership Recruitment Team

The membership recruitment team approach to growing membership chooses to empower a team of people to drive the recruitment strategy. Whether these are staff members or not, or even a combination of staff and volunteers, will depend on the context of each Alliance. An advantage of this method is that a diversity of perspectives, skills and qualities, are brought to the table and utilized for the benefit of the Alliance. It may take some time for a team to become highly efficient at recruiting, but once achieved, this can be a very effective method for developing and implementing a recruitment strategy. Don't forget to find ways to celebrate the participation of each team member.

4. Annual Membership Recruitment Campaign

This method focuses the recruitment strategy on an annual campaign or member drive. This campaign may occupy a month or six weeks and becomes the primary focus of the Association's activities during a specific period of time. Frequently, everyone pitches in and serves to support the membership drive in some form. Of course, this method requires thorough planning and preparation. Incentives and rewards still serve to motivate the campaign and celebrate the successes of strong recruiters.

5. Incentives and Special Offers

Frequently incentives and special offers are used as a method for membership recruitment in combination with many of the above recruitment approaches. Incentives are likely tied to such things as reduced fees, early-bird fee discounts, and price reductions for the programs, products and services offered by your association. Sometimes, to attract new members, an association may offer the first year at a reduced fee. Or, may ask for the same fee, but extend the period of membership from 12 months to 18 months, etc. Special offers may include half-off prices, or introductory subscriptions and trial memberships. A trial membership might offer a new member three months at no cost.

A Combination of the Above

Of course, our astute readers have realized that associations with very active membership strategies are probably using more than one of the methods mentioned above. For example, it would be natural for an association that hires a director of membership development to assign a committee to work with the director, thus building a membership recruitment team that enjoys the added benefit of a staff person to provide leadership and focus. Furthermore, strong associations recognize the power of satisfied members recruiting other new members. Beyond endorsements, satisfied and highly motivated members become great recruiters for your alliance. Also, the annual drive can help the whole organization remember it is all about the members and recruiting new members is a primary task of every association.

Luke recorded in Acts 2:27 a reminder to the Church that it is God who actively brings people into the fold:

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:47

The drive to recruit new members into our associations and alliances is not a drive to see people committing their lives to God or enter the Kingdom of God. Yet, our organizations are spiritual in nature, and there is always a divine element in the drive for recruitment. As we focus our strategies, our prayer should be “Lord, who do you want to join this Alliance?” Or, “Lord, shows us how you are already at work bringing people in to share this vision.” And we are deeply conscious of how building an Evangelical Alliance is a spiritual activity and must be led by the Spirit, empowered by God and glorifying to His son Jesus Christ.

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

We invite you to Join the discussion by visiting the Leadership Institute Facebook page: www.facebook.com/worlddea.li The question we pose for this edition of Imagine is: What recruitment methods have you (and your association or Evangelical Alliance) found to be effective?

We welcome other comments and questions.

New Resources

The Leadership Institute serves our Evangelical Alliance and supporting members by providing electronic resources. You can find these resources at: WEAresources.org, or by [clicking on the Resources link](#) at worlddea.org. Here are some new additions for you to enjoy.

- Christian Engagement in the Public Arena A Code of Conduct from the European Evangelical Alliance

This code summarises the points in the European Evangelical Alliance’s new Socio-Political Approach. This longer document gives a biblical rationale for how we believe Christians should conduct themselves in the public arena. The Approach & Code were formally approved by EEA in June 2011. Both will be available shortly in several languages at www.europeanea.org/news.html

- The European Evangelical Alliance’s Socio-Political Approach

This article presents the socio-political approach of the European Evangelical Alliance. The pillars of the approach are: Being Christ like, zealous for the honour of Christ and the promotion of the Gospel, agents of spiritual and social transformation, as well as, the place and need for disagreement and controversy, and ensuring our involvement is grounded on the wisdom of Scripture.

Effective Public Engagement

The Effective Public Engagement course is scheduled to start **March 16**. This newly revised course will include input from many prominent Evangelical leaders who bring expertise in various areas of public engagement.

Let's be friends

If you haven't noticed, the [WEA Leadership Institute is on Facebook](#). Please join us and **like us!**

Links

- About the [WEA Leadership Institute](#)
- About the [Certificate in Association Leadership](#)
- Download the [WEA-LI Prospectus](#)
- [Apply Online](#)



IMAGINE is published monthly
ten editions a year.

Missed out on one of our WEA-LI Imagine! Newsletters? View our [online archive](#)

74 Trinity Place Suite 1400, New York, NY 10006-2122

Telephone: +1 646 658 3143

E-mail: weali@worldea.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/worldea.li

Twitter: www.twitter.com/wea_li

More than we can imagine! - Eph. 3:20

To unsubscribe from the WEA Leadership Institute Imagine newsletter, please email weali@worldea.org with the subject heading "Remove from "Imagine" list."