

Recruiting and keeping armored combats.

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The mind set needed to go into recruiting a volunteer army is not one of force. To join or not to join needs to be their idea.

How do you do that? - Know your target audience!

For a lot of new people the actual SCA culture will grow on them, but the martial aspect is the hook.

- You have two major components you can work with:
 - a) Martial arts
 - i) The martial aspect will help new recruits see we are not a LARP
 - ii) Make sure you communicate this is a full contact sport
 - (a) Most martial arts take years before you can get into full contact
 - 1. This is an advantage the SCA has over other marital sports
 - 2. Sparring is more like a dance, but from day one you can hit someone
 - b) A volunteer sport
 - i) We offer a wide range of things to do
 - ii) Family friendly group
 - iii) The chance to learn new skills
 - iv) Networking
- Use the language of your audience
 - i) Lavish medieval saying are fun but tend to scare people away when recruiting
 - ii) For example:
 - (a) You could be a “medieval warrior”, or train for full contact western martial arts
 - iii) Make them wonder who you are
 - (a) We all can picture a medieval warrior but what about western martial arts?
 - iv) Mystery is one of your greatest powers, so use it
- How do you be mysterious when advertising?
 - i) Just keep it short and sweet
 - (a) Inform them:
 - (b) Where, when, and what
 - (c) No medieval pictures, use someone in a track suit with sword and buckler
 - ii) Make the SCA seem bigger then it is but don't lie
 - (a) “We are a worldwide organization”
 - (b) “Been practicing since 1355”
 - (c) “We are a western martial arts dojo”
 - iii) Never expect to get a recruit from advertising.
 - (a) This might be a shock - you can get recruits from advertising, but to expect it is an unrealistic expectation.
- Do demos!

- i) This should be a show.
 - (1) Make sure there is fighting going on all the time
 - (2) Change the types of fight periodically
 - ii) Have snacks and water for people watching.
 - (1) Bring a watermelon and show why we wear helmets by having everyone take turns hitting the melon. Then eat the aftermath.
 - iii) Task someone to explain what is going on
 - (a) This person needs to look like your target audience
 - 1. Someone in their 50's will have a harder time recruiting a 20 year old and vice versa
 - 2. All ages have a language that makes them identify with each other and using that will make a world of difference
 - (b) The people you task to be your voice need to have charisma and be easy to talk to
- Now you have a recruit, what do you do?
 - i) Be aware of over exposure
 - (1) Giving someone new too much information can make them run for the hills
 - (a) Tread lightly
 - ii) Assign two people every time to handle new comers
 - (a) These two people need look like your target audience to ease the transition.
 - (b) Both assigned members need to be on the same page and have a training redirect ready
 - (c) They should also be able to stop any other fighter from interfering. Again, over load is a big problem in the SCA and it easily accounts for 50% of our failure to recruit.
 - (d) An easy way to prevent overload is ask question, listen, and the most important is relate to them
 - (e) Relating to your new comers will make them feel like they are in the right place.
 - Here are some questions you could ask
 - (i) What brought you here?
 - (ii) Why do you like this sport?
 - (iii) What do you like doing in your free time?
- But there is no armor for new people! Not a problem.
 - i) Have a pell to show simple cuts to different body parts
 - (a) If you have two people you can mirror cuts from a safe distance by making sure the swords are the only thing they can hit when making a cut
 - ii) Talk about the historical relevance from our swords to the medieval ones.
 - (a) Such as how they are the same weight and length
 - iii) Show them foot work and how our rules keep us safe
 - iv) Use a teaching style that is similar to our modern class rooms
 - (1) Do group stretches

- (2) Pair up fighters and show the group where they went wrong and where they were right
- (3) Assign easy to do homework
 - (a) Hit the pell 20 time between now and the next meeting
- What about armor?
 - i) Fix up the loaner gear so there is at least one nice kit.
 - (1) The armor they try on needs to be inspirational, not detrimental to fighting.
 - (2) If you have no loaner gear speak to your Shire/Barony to see if they can fund you money so you can buy gear
 - ii) Let the new recruits know when the next armoring night is
 - iii) If you do not have a weekly one, schedule a day between you and the recruit
 - iv) Giving them an enjoyable place to work on something that will be theirs is important
 - (a) Bring food and drink to these gatherings
 - v) Armor can be both intimidating and expensive but everyone has a local person who can tackle it
- Getting recruits into gear
 - i) Be up front about the price
 - ii) Use plastics to cut costs
 - (a) Most people leave their first kit behind when they decide a persona
 - (b) Barrel plastic is cheap and easy to come by
 - 1. Look for it at any farm store or brewery.
 - i. Farm stores sell rain barrels without the filters for about \$40 and you can make a whole kit out of one
 - ii. Breweries throw them away but require you to know someone on the inside
 - iii) Some recruits will have the money to buy nice armor
 - iv) Keep a list of reputable armories and help them spend their money on armor that will work for them
- Once you have done all this keeping them is easy
 - i) Things you need to keep in mind
 - (a) Be consistent
 - 1. Having a meeting every week with your trainer there motivates anyone.
 - (b) Become friends
 - 1. Have get-togethers outside of meetings
 - i. Game night
 - ii. Pub crawls
 - iii. Family get together
 - iv. Just hanging out
 - (c) Be a guide to the wonders world of the SCA

1. Do not over burden them
 - a. Let them find out what they want in their own time. Help them when they need it.
 2. Bring them to events
 3. Get them authorized
 4. Tell them way we use titles and how
 - i. Show them what to look for with someone that has a title
 5. Help them pick a persona
 - i. Have them talk to people at events on why they chose their persona
 - ii. So them all the pros and cons of every persona they choose
 - iii. Try to be non-biased and listen
 - iv. Help them find/make the armor they need
- What if, after they have done all this, they become bored?
 - i) This ends up happening to everyone and it will change how active they are in the SCA
 - ii) To stop them from being inactive here are some ideas
 - (a) Listen to them and find out what they are good at
 1. Use the information to lead them to a place in the SCA they will love
 - i. This is important! Even if it isn't armored combat
 - ii. They will tell their friend and the cycle will continue
 - iii. If you ended up pushing them out the SCA loses as a whole, because they will tell their friends what we did.
 - (b) If they do not have interests in anything but fighting have them peruse a knight/squire relationship
 1. This will start the cycle with a whole new group and give them a goal to achieve