



Where's the

NEW GUY?

6 ROADBLOCKS ON THE PATH TO INCREASING
CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP



A new guy (or gal), is the guest who we all know. He or she is a prospective member that comes to an event or reaches out to consider joining. You may see him (or her) once or twice, but then eventually, someone asks:

"Where's the new guy?"

Everyone shrugs and moves on to the business at hand. But wait. A potential member expressed interest in your organization, shows up to a

meeting, and then nothing? That's a lost opportunity, for both the new guy and for your chapter.

So instead of letting the new guy disappear, what can you do about it?

- Nothing?
- Send an email?
- Call?
- Develop a strategic plan for increasing your membership?

LET'S LOOK AT EACH STAGE OF YOUR PROCESS

What's your process?

Who's responsible for follow up?

Before everyone points to the membership chair, take a step back; this isn't just a membership problem.

The new guy moves to your area; he was a member in a similar organization before moving. He's considering joining your chapter, to make connections and to network, hoping to meet locals in his profession and continue to develop his career.

What happens when he tries to locate your organization and learn more?

Does he experience some or all of the following roadblocks?

WHERE'S THE NEW GUY?

6 roadblocks on the path to increasing chapter membership

1

LOOKS FOR YOUR CHAPTER AND MEETING SCHEDULE ONLINE.

New guy Googles your chapter, but there is no website. He finds your national website; your chapter and meeting frequency are listed, but not the next meeting date. Emailing your contact, he gets a response the next day with details on the meeting and an apology for the website not being up-to-date.



REGISTERS AND GOES TO THE MEETING.

Not being a member, the new guy tries to pay with his credit card, but is told you only take checks or cash. After some confusion at the door because there was no record of the email communication, he pays and receives a hand-written receipt.

2

3

ATTENDS THE MEETING.

Walking into the room alone, new guy networks, talking and introducing himself to several people. Everyone seems friendly and interested in the fact that he just moved to town. But, the hand-written name tags are difficult to read, and he can't tell who's a board member, member, or guest.



THE PROGRAM STARTS.

There's a speaker, a PowerPoint, and handouts. When the meeting ends, the new guy sticks around for a few minutes. He says goodbye to some of those he met, and leaves, wondering why there were no "new people" introductions during the meeting.

4

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WAITS FOR FOLLOW UP.

The new guy doesn't hear from anyone in the chapter. Realizing he left his handouts at the meeting, he goes to the national website to download them, but the website still shows last month's meeting, and there are no resources to download.



THREE WEEKS LATER.

With the next meeting underway, several members remember meeting the new guy. They ask where he is, but no one seems to know.

6



WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

3

Let's look at this from the new guy's perspective. How do his expectations compare to his actual experience?

Most likely, there's a significant gap.

He can't find your chapter website on Google, because you don't have a website. So, he visits the national site and locates some basic information on your chapter. There's a listing and a contact that he emails for details. The reply provides information on the next event, but there's no registration link. He puts the event on his calendar. Already, he's done a lot of research and expended unnecessary effort just planning to attend your meeting.

A few days before the event, he sees the appointment on his calendar. The event had slipped his mind. He hadn't received any reminders. He chalks that up to his "newness," or perhaps that the local organization doesn't send reminders.

The day of the event, he can't find his email correspondence with the contact he made on the national website, so he checks the national website again. The event has been added, but he has to search the venue name to find the address and visit another website to get directions. At this point, he's starting to get irritated about the extra steps.

REGISTERS AND GOES TO THE MEETING

Once at the event, the new guy approaches the registration desk. The volunteers (who aren't wearing name tags) ask if he is a member, and he tells them no, adding that he'd emailed with Jane Smith earlier in the month. They are friendly, but look puzzled and have no information regarding his arrival. They say it is not a problem and write his information on a paper form. The new guy is getting increasingly frustrated, as he knows he provided his contact information in the email.

The event is \$15, significantly less than what he is used to paying for similar events, so he begins to question the quality of the meeting.

He decides to take a chance, considering all the effort he took to get there. He hands over his credit card, to which he's told you only take cash or checks.

Now he's really getting aggravated. But he gives them \$15 in cash, writes his name on a plain name badge sticker, which he peels off and sticks on his shirt, and walks into the meeting.

Entering the room, he sees a sizeable group of professionals networking. This alleviates some of his irritation, as he's excited to talk with and meet new people. He introduces himself and has some great conversations. Exchanging business cards, he asks to meet some of the board members. They are very friendly, as they exchange pleasantries and thank him for coming. But they quickly excuse themselves and move on. The new guy is left feeling that the interaction fell a bit short. Frustrated that the board members leave him standing alone, he continues to network.



After a bit, he hears that the meeting will be starting, so he takes a seat. The event is set up in typical classroom style, and the speaker stands behind a

podium, walking through a PowerPoint presentation. He's heard most of the information before, but he thinks it's a good refresher. Looking

around the room, he can tell many people feel the same way, and he wonders if all your meetings will be like this.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

After the presentation, there are announcements and then everyone gets up to go. He waits a few minutes to be approached by the board members, but that doesn't happen. He says goodbye to several people he's met and leaves. In his car, he remembers he's left the handout at the meeting, but shrugs in indifference and drives home.

Once home, he regrets not taking the handout, as it contains the speaker's contact information. But

since the national website isn't up-to-date, he can't find what he needs. The new guy tries to remember the speaker's last name, to look for him online. Frustrated, he gives up.

A week later, the new guy wonders why no one has reached out to him. He hasn't received any emails or a phone call, so he doubts he'll get an invite to your next meeting.

Several weeks pass and no one reaches out to the new guy. The next meeting comes and goes, but since he wasn't added to the email list, the new guy missed it. Maybe at some point, he'll think about the chapter again and try to come; but he probably won't.



The next meeting comes and goes, but since he wasn't added to the email list, the new guy missed it. Maybe at some point, he'll think about the chapter again and try to come; but he probably won't.

Well, you know where he isn't. He's not coming to meetings and he's not engaging with your chapter. With his lackluster experience, he's decided he'll get the industry knowledge he wants on his own, rather than spending the

time and money to attend one of your events. He'll also network through work and other local events instead.

HOW TO ENGAGE THE NEW GUY AND KEEP HIM COMING BACK

This is an extreme example. But are there pieces of the new guy's experience that sound like your organization?

Here are things you might consider, to help smooth the path to membership in your chapter:

- 1 Have a local chapter website that's easy to find and use
- 2 Improve email communications for members and prospects
- 3 Simplify your event registration and payment process
- 4 Hold engaging meetings
- 5 Implement a process to connect with guests at meetings
- 6 Create a follow-up process specifically targeted to meeting guests
- 7 Communicate urgency for membership to increase the likelihood that prospects become chapter members
- 8 See how StarChapter can help improve your new guy experience and [schedule a demo today!](#)

What if you had a plan in place to help ensure the new guy's experience with your chapter is a positive one? Improving your relationship with the new guy can help increase your attendance, your membership, and ultimately, your revenues. Stay tuned for more new guy adventures, brought to you by StarChapter – Association Management Made Easy.