



Recruiting Do's & Don'ts

Coming up with new educational programs and ideas is part of my job. So I've been thinking about creating a session on GWTA recruiting techniques. Part of the program is a set of "Do's" and "Don'ts". My idea is to share ideas that others have successfully used to invite and involve motorcyclists to join the GWTA. Let me share some of my own recommended "Do's" and "Don't".

First, do always be ready to give a potential member some GWTA applications. The national office would be happy to give your Chapter all the green tri-fold membership applications you can use. Carry them with you on your bike, in your car, in your purse, and in your briefcase. You never know when you might meet someone who wants to know about the fun you're having. (I was recently on my way to the Yuba City birthday party, and gave an application to a waitress at a restaurant along the way.)

But don't be too pushy. Nothing will push a prospect away faster than if you seem too desperate or needy. Be sensitive to the signals that the prospect needs to think about it, and/or let them say "No thanks". Better to give them a positive impression of GWTA, rather than be a pain in the neck they would rather avoid.

Do remember to be friendly. Use the potential members' name when you talk to them. Involve them in the conversation. Ask open-ended questions about their bike, what kind of riding they like to do, and so forth. People want to be around other fun people.

Directly related to this is to don't bad-mouth another brand of bike or another organization. Generally, we don't care what you ride, as long as you ride. Same with other groups. (Imagine how you might feel if you visited another group, and they made disparaging remarks about the GWTA. Now you know what not to do.)

Do be sure to tell personal stories. People remember you from your stories. Talk about the rides you like, what you like about your chapter, the fun times you have had.

I know it's very easy to do, but please try to avoid using acronyms that may be unfamiliar to the potential member. You and I know that a "CD" is the Chapter Director, and "ACD" is the Assistant Chapter Director, but your guest may not. So, if you see a look of confusion, stop and explain what they might not know.

Do share general GWTA benefits: that we're member-owned and operated, the 24/7 Blue-Line, the Touring News magazine, our emphasis on safety, and that we have annual gatherings at fun places. (These things can be second-nature to us, and easy to forget to tell prospective members.)

And don't forget to explain other things that may be unfamiliar, like 50-50, Poker Runs, and so forth. Again, we all know, but new folks might not.

Do “ask for the order”. Be sure to make a personal invitation (“Gee, we would sure love to go riding with you.”) and invite the potential member to join the GWTA. So many people have told me that this is probably our biggest weakness as an organization. We get attention, folks come to visit our chapters, but they fall away because we just do not close the loop and invite them to join.

My last “don’t” is, don’t make assumptions about the potential new members. Just because a fellow doesn’t own a Gold Wing doesn’t mean they wouldn’t consider joining us. Just because they live 50 miles from the meeting location doesn’t mean they wouldn’t make the trip. Just because they are a member of another group doesn’t mean they wouldn’t consider joining the GWTA, too.

Finally, make sure you take care of those new members who join. Put as much energy (or more) into making them feel welcome and part of the community. Remember what worked for you, and treat your new members at least that well ... or better.

All these “Do’s” and “Don’ts” are part of a new seminar I’ll be working on over the next few months. To see the template, and give me some ideas on what you think about the basics of the seminar, check out the program under the “Tools” section of the GWTA Chapter Olympics web site, www.gwta.org/olympics.

You and your new members will enjoy the ride on the way to “Destination Friendship”.

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