

Pre-Close & Quality Response Guide

We all know the Top 10 Reasons why potential members turn down our invitations to join. If you don't, they're listed at the end of this resource.

But when a prospective member says “no” or “not yet” and they follow it up with “I can't afford it,” “My partner won't let me,” “I'm going to wait a couple months,” or “I'll think about it,” did you know that they probably don't really mean any of those things? It's true. Most of those concerns or excuses are really just a veiled way of communicating something much simpler. Much more important.

Here it is. Those excuses communicate one of these two things..

- 1. You all don't seem to LOVE me yet.**
- 2. I don't really LOVE you all yet.**

Now, they'll never admit this. And I know it sounds kind of hokey. But, after years of teaching, researching, and watching organizational recruitment, we're 100% convinced that **LOVE** is the main ingredient. And 99% of the time, when someone is hesitating to join, it isn't for any real logical reason — it's a lack of human connection, a lack of emotional charge, a lack of love.

Organizations sell one thing — we peddle **LOVE**. We call it brotherhood, sisterhood, purpose, values, etc., but all of those things are just a manifestation of a young person feeling **LOVED**.

We teach an important recruitment skill called a “Pre-Close.” That's when, after you've gotten to know a prospect really well, and they've gotten to know you and your organization really well, you ask, “If we were to ask you to join, what would you say?” It's at this point they'll respond with either a YES, NO, or MAYBE. “No's” and “Maybe's” get a follow up question: “What's one thing holding you back?” At which point they'll give you one of the Top 10 reasons listed below.

But, understand that what the Pre-Close process is really about is an opportunity for each party to have a real emotional check in. To find out if the prospective member feels at **HOME** yet. If they feel like they're part of your group, if they feel like they can matter within your organization... if they feel loved.

When you find out their concerns or excuses for not yet wanting to join, you'll also find that you probably won't be able to convince them to join with logic, information, data, or bullet-points. They'll need more connection, more friendship, more emotional exchange — factual info will be helpful too, but the real “convincing” is an act of the heart not the brain.

Pre-Close Process

When we teach recruiters how to Pre-Close, we always emphasize the first step of the three-step pre-close process.

1. **VALIDATE** their concern.
2. **ISOLATE** each concern to deal with them separately.
3. **TIMELINE** the conversation – set a date for next steps and a decision.

To **VALIDATE** someone means to truly listen to them. To let them know that their concern about joining is not only valid, it is completely normal. “So you’re concerned about the cost. That makes total sense. It isn’t free. It isn’t even cheap. It’s a lot of money for most people to make this kind of investment. I had the same concern when I was in your shoes – I didn’t come from money. I didn’t have a full-time job. I was texting Mom and Dad for rent money all the time my first year. That is a completely valid concern.”

Notice that the first thing you should do is just let them have their concern. It’s real to them. Even if it is based on inaccurate information. Just let it be. Love them. Hear them. Validate them. There is no “right” or “wrong” here. There is only loved enough or not.

Next we **ISOLATE** by asking, “If money wasn’t a concern, is there anything else holding you back?” If there is, validate it and add it to the list. If not, then move on.

Finally, the Pre-Close process ends with a **TIMELINE**. The last thing you want is to leave an uncertain prospective member uncertain about his or her uncertainty. Set a timeline for resolution. “Listen, I don’t know if you’ll think differently or not, but I want to make sure we give this a chance. Could we have some more conversations and share some more experiences for the next 7 days, and then one week from now I’ll ask you this same question again?” Don’t let things drag on.

Top 10 Reasons Why People Don't Join Organizations

(and what they really probably mean)

1. I can't afford it. (You don't seem to love/respect/understand me enough yet for me to make this investment.)

You might also ask, "Do you know how much it costs?" "Can I connect you with some other members who also had financial concerns before joining?"

2. My wife/husband/boyfriend/girlfriend doesn't want me to join. (You haven't shown the people important to me that I will be loved/respected/supported here.)

You might also ask, "Would it be o.k. if I talked with them?" "What information can I give you to help them better understand our organization?"

3. I have to focus on my work. (I don't feel loved/respected here.)

You might also ask, "Have you met our development chair?" "Can we help you develop a personal skills performance plan?"

4. Young people don't join organizations. (I feel like because I'm younger, I won't be loved/respected here.)

You might also ask, "Can I introduce you to Casey who joined at 21?" "Can we talk about how our organization can help prepare you for your career?"

5. I don't want to have a large time commitment. (I don't feel loved/respected here.)

You might also ask, "Are you aware of the details of our membership?" "How would you make involvement better if you could?"

6. I don't want to be a stereotypical organizational guy/girl. (You all haven't shown that you're capable of more than caring about someone at a surface level.)

You might also ask, "What stereotypes come to mind when you say that?" "We're looking for people to help us create a new image, what do you think our image should be?"

7. I don't have time. (I don't feel loved/respected here.)

You might also ask, "How much time are you willing to commit?" "What is a realistic amount of time for you?" "Can I introduce you to our two busiest members?"

8. I don't want to buy my friends. (It doesn't seem like you love/respect each other.)

You might also ask, "What other organizations or opportunities have you pursued that have included membership fees?" "We value your investment in the organization, what would make it a positive return for you?"

9. I don't want to be overwhelmed. (You all don't seem to love/respect me enough for me to trust that you won't hurt me.)

You might also ask, "Are you aware of our orientation program and educational efforts?" "Would you make me a promise that you'll call me if you feel like you're being overwhelmed?"

10. I don't drink. (I don't feel like you all love/respect people like me.)

You might also ask, "Can I introduce you to several other members who don't drink?" "Would you come to a social event with me this week so I can show you how that's OK?"