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Recruiting New Members

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Recruiting New Members

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The Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science took place in New York City from May 25 to May 28, 2006. We attended the convention and had a number of goals that we wanted to accomplish: assume a position on the graduate student board, present at a poster session, attend various conference events, and recruit conferees for the Society for Occupational Health Psychology. It is the last goal about which we are writing. We hope that this article will help our SOHP colleagues recruit, at some future time, new members for our organization.

One of the first things we did was in concert with other SOHP members, and prior to the convention. SOHP members, including an artist, arrived at a consensus regarding the design for a flyer. There was considerable debate. Different versions of the flyer were developed. The final version of the flyer was easy to read; it clearly provided contact information; and the flyer was balanced in that it showed a man and a woman representing blue and white collar workers.

As background for the next step, we have to mention that we had no budget. The cost of setting up a table at which we could distribute flyers and issues of the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* and converse with conferees was prohibitive. In response to the budgetary constraint, one of us called the conference organizers in Washington, explained that he was a long-time APS member, and asked if APS administrators would not mind if we could distribute flyers to prospective SOHP members while going about our business at the convention, but without making ourselves a nuisance. The APS administrator who was our contact person gave her assent.

Next, we scoured the convention bulletin in order to identify posters and presentations by individuals who may be interested in SOHP. We defined prospective members as individuals whose posters and presentations were in industrial/organizational psychology, health psychology without necessarily having an occupational orientation, and occupational health psychology. At poster sessions we visited presenters whom we thought were a good fit and spoke directly with them, and gave them flyers. We also waited outside panel sessions where audience members, in our view, were likely prospective SOHP members. We spoke informally with people and made sure they received flyers.

We also displayed flyers in prominent locations, including the message board that every convention has. We had many extra flyers, allowing viewers to take flyers home.

We hope what we learned will help other SOHP members, when they attend conferences and conventions, to recruit new members to our organization. In summary, this is what we learned:

1. Have a flyer that simply and attractively provides the information the prospective member needs including contact information.
2. Get permission from the sponsoring organization to distribute flyers.
3. Don't just distribute the flyers. Make personal contact with prospective members.
4. You can't talk to everyone. Display flyers in prominent places, and have plenty of extras for prospective members to take home.

"...what we learned will help other SOHP members, when they attend conferences and conventions, to recruit new members to our organization."

If you are interested in becoming a member of SOHP please visit our website at <http://sohp-online.org/>
