

TEXAS PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

Roadmap to 100% student membership

Here are some thoughts on creating an effective “membership recruitment campaign.” You already are passionate about student membership in APTA/TPTA. This document will add some strategic thinking to that passion. And remember what philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Tom Waugh have said for centuries: Passion + Strategic thinking = UNLIMITED AWESOMENESS

STEP 1: FORM YOUR Reach 100 TEAM

Reaching full membership is a group effort. Your Reach 100 team should consist of enthusiastic faculty; student leaders from all classes, possibly some therapists from the community, preferably some recent grads and of course your program’s Reach 100 Task Force member in a consultative role. It’s important that you keep faculty players involved in your efforts from start to finish. These individuals play a vital role in terms of the influence they wield over their students. Even if they don’t require membership, a strong suggestion from their end can do wonders. If your program has a particular focus or is known for excelling in a specific practice setting, consider involving representatives from that Section. Student membership in Sections is very affordable, and may provide additional incentive for them to join.

STEP 2: MATERIALS

Here’s some good news: You don’t need to re-invent the wheel of membership recruiting, APTA staff and volunteers across the State and the country are happy to share materials with you. Here are some ideas:

- Peruse the MANY resources at www.apta.org/membershipdevelopment and the Reach 100 page at www.tpta.org/reach100 for ideas, samples and other materials. At a minimum, download the “12 reasons to belong” brochure, it speaks directly to students. Copy enough membership applications for every student in your program
- Obtain testimonials of the value of APTA membership from current students and former student members now working in the field
- Ask your professors to offer extra credit for APTA membership and/or participation. This may be more effective on a group basis rather than an individual basis, i.e. a professor offers to drop everyone’s lowest quiz grade for the semester, but only if the entire class becomes APTA members.

You'll probably need two or three meetings with your team to make decisions regarding which materials work for you, from when to when to run your campaign, etc. Once you are done planning, it's time to have some fun:

STEP 3: THE CAMPAIGN

There are three distinct phases to a campaign. These are the Kick Off, the Divide and Conquer phase and the Race to the finish. You need a strategy for all three:

PHASE 1: THE KICK OFF

Create a fun event to kick off your school's Reach 100 campaign. I am thinking Assembly, balloons, a faculty member who promises to shave his beard when the goal is reached, etc.

Formally announce the campaign goal: We, faculty and student leaders of R100 University envision that 100% of our students will join APTA/TPTA by April 30, 2010.

Consider a support statement, and get some emotion in it. The support statement explains why full student membership is important for your program. For example: At R100 University, we graduate professionals, not merely clinicians. We expect students to support their future profession by joining APTA and TPTA.

- The due date is important, it creates urgency. Set it about 90 days into the future, that's about how long you'll need. It also allows for short term goal setting (30 and 60 day goals).
- The 100% belonging gives students who may not "get" that belonging to TPTA is good for them an additional reason to join, which is not letting their peers/teachers down.

Hand out the materials you gathered, make sure that every prospective student member gets a membership application in hand. The easier you make it to join, the quicker you will get your entire class signed up.

Communication strategy: Make sure that you post the goal, and some type of progress meter in a central area in the school, charting your progress during the next weeks and months is important, it builds momentum.

PHASE 2: DIVIDE AND CONQUER

This is the longest of the three phases, and the one that is not always recognized and planned for, because most of us hope/wish/pray that everyone joins during the kick-off party!!! Although that would be nice, most likely, the class will follow a bit of a bell curve:

- 10%-25% of the class will join during or right after the kick-off party
- 50%-80% will join with fairly minimal prompting, but only when asked directly and often when asked for a third or fourth time.

- About 10%-25% will join only when the finish line is in sight, and they will join because they don't want to be the one to spoil the fun, and be that one non member left standing.

So how does one "Divide and Conquer?"

List your targets (all the prospective members) and discuss which student leader goes after which non member. No one student leader should have more than 10 prospective members. A class of 30 needs at least 3 student leaders who all chase after 10 prospective members.

Talk to people one on one. APTA data shows that people join because a peer comes to them and says "do as I do" or "do this for me."

Change "No" into "not today." Expect to get a lot of "maybe," "I think I will," "I can't do that today," etc. When you get a response like that, ask the prospective member if you can contact them in the near future: "I understand that you can't join today, would it be ok if I will check back with you next week. As you know, we still have six weeks until our goal due date, when all of us will be members, hopefully you will find a way to join your peers by then."

It's important to have a communications plan during the DIVIDE AND CONQUER phase. It will help all of you to stay energized and it builds momentum. Here are some ideas:

- Publish regular progress reports, 30 days into the campaign, then at 60, and, as you get close to the due date, or close to reaching full membership, publish WEEKLY UPDATES. Do something visual, a barometer that fills up to the top, a countdown, only five more to go, etc.
- Create a bulletin board display in a prominent place and highlight pictures from student activities, posters, brochures, membership information, scholarship opportunities for APTA members, new members, and a calendar of upcoming events. Demonstrate that your school's APTA member involvement is strong and growing.
- Publicize any awards won by fellow students, such as Student Assembly Sponsored Awards or APTA scholarships. People like to join groups that are successful.
- Ask professors to mention APTA to students during class or their advising sessions.
- Hold a meeting in the computer lab and demonstrate the valuable resources and information available to APTA members at www.apta.org.
- Hold an informational meeting for prospective student members. Have members and student alumni tell the visitors how networking through APTA helped them find jobs or start their own practice.
- Invite a successful PT or PTA in your community to speak to students on the value of joining APTA and the local state chapter.
- Always speak with excitement and pride when describing APTA or your fellow students. Remember: Enthusiasm is contagious!

- **DO NOT** shame people into joining! **DO NOT** list names of non members on any written materials, don't call out classmates in front of their peers. It's not right, and not necessary. **Run a positive campaign!!**

PHASE 3: RACE TO THE FINISH

Some of us don't get our acts together until we have to. As you get closer to the due date, get excited, not frustrated with your hold outs. Continue to reach out to them even if they already promised you TEN TIMES they would mail the darn application!!!

Here are some ideas for reaching your procrastinators:

- Fill in the application for them, so that all they need to do is write the check (You will be AMAZED at how many times this simple act will yield a member)
- Emphasize messages about the campaign drawing to an end, the celebration festivities you guys will have WHEN (not if) you reach your goal, a reminder that professor so and so is shaving off his beard in celebration. Don't stop talking about the benefits of APTA, however, at this point in the game, use the urgency, the fact that we are close to our due date to your advantage
- COMMUNICATE: Emails, posters, announcements through the school PA system, Facebook status updates, create excitement, only five more to go, WOOHOO

CELEBRATE, AND PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR

When you reach your goal, have a party. It's a great opportunity to celebrate, and to recognize those of you who worked your behinds off to make this happen! TAKE LOTS OF PICTURES, we want to publish your story in our newsletter, Synergy, on Facebook, everywhere!!

There is one last, very important item for you to take care of. Too often, students join APTA and TPTA without a real vision on how to take advantage of their membership. On the Reach 100 page (www.tpta.org/Reach100), we have a section called "now that you joined". It's full of ideas on using your membership to enhance your student experience, as well as setting you up for early success as you approach graduation.

This is the end of the membership campaign, make sure that this is the beginning of experiencing membership in APTA and TPTA. Plan to attend a conference, go to a district meeting, use the many resources on www.APTA.org.

Thank you for your involvement with APTA and TPTA, if you have any questions in regards to student membership recruiting, please contact us at membership@tpta.org