

The “No” Factor — Overcoming Barriers

“There is always a sale being made. Either you are selling them on why they need it, or they are selling you on why they don’t.”

~ Ben Affleck, Boiler Room 1999

All brothers must be prepared to handle common objections. The way in which brothers handle themselves in that situation may determine whether or not the deal is closed. Preparing the chapter to handle adverse responses is imperative to appearing confident in the eyes of prospective members. Anticipating objections *is* something you can prepare for, and a skill you can take with you wherever you go.

When you hear an objection, a recruit has reached a barrier. A barrier is any belief about a fraternity, whether true or false, that will discourage a recruit from joining. In order to recruit top-notch new members, the chapter must understand common barriers. A man with questions or objections is often very carefully weighing his options. He is likely the type of man who will be a great brother.

Addressing the situation:

1. Listen to the potential member’s concerns.
2. Inquire if you may ask a question or two about his concern. After a “yes” response, ask a few open-ended questions to find out more about his objection.
3. Side with him. Explain how you had similar concerns, or point someone else out in the chapter who was in the same situation.
4. Put the concern in the form of a question, and prepare your response. (For example, if he is concerned with grades, “How would you feel if I told you SigEp’s GPA is above the all-student GPA?”)
5. Answer the question.

OBJECTIONS & SAMPLE RESPONSES

Always ask if you can inquire further. His agreement opens him up to talking about the objection and shows that you care.

When applicable, preface all of your responses by saying, “I understand, I went through the same things, or I had the same objections.”

1. *“I don’t have the time.”*

“I understand the feeling. With work, school, and the other activities I’m involved with, things can get pretty hectic. However, I’ve found that the Fraternity has really helped me stay balanced. The additional responsibility has helped me stay motivated and involved.

“The Fraternity isn’t intended to detract from your other obligations. It is merely here to enhance your college career. Balancing your time is part of the process. The time invested in SigEp has been the most rewarding spent in my college career.”

2. *“I don’t have the money.”*

Be straightforward! Don’t lie about money just to get him to join. If he’s concerned about money to begin with, he probably will be throughout his time in the chapter. Be honest about all of the financial commitments on the front end and put them in perspective.

“I can assure you that the experiences offered in SigEp will yield you more benefit than the same amount of money spent elsewhere. In addition, most organizations require money to operate, and a fraternity is no different.”

Don’t be afraid to cover some of the things the dues cover: athletics, social, member development, etc. Show them what they get for their money!

3. *“I don’t feel I need to buy my friends.”*

“Being a part of a fraternity isn’t a matter of buying your friends. It’s more like playing on an athletic team. It’s not as if you play sports because you need to meet people, you play for enjoyment, the teamwork, and winning. You get to experience many of the same feelings throughout your membership in the Fraternity. Just like you pay league fees and tournament fees with sports, that’s where the dues come in.”

4. *“My parents won’t let me.”*

Talk about all of the positive things your Fraternity does for its members, the community, and university. Offer to speak to his parents if he didn’t think they would mind, or better yet, put an alumnus or member’s parents in contact with the recruit’s parents.

Or

“My parents are concerned about my grades.”

Mention the chapters’ comprehensive Sound Mind program. Mention things like study hours, mentor programs, cultural events, etc. If it’s favorable, talk about where the Fraternity ranks on campus relative to the other organizations in GPA. If not, mention how the Fraternity is making a concerted effort toward its academics and how he is the type of individual you are looking for to boost that standard. Again, offer to speak to his parents or put an alumnus/parent in touch.

Whatever you do, don’t lie about your scholarship.

5. *“I think I’m going to wait until next semester/quarter.”*

“Many guys think about waiting to join. Some who do, wish they hadn’t because of the experiences they missed that first semester/quarter. By the time they joined, over 12% of their college career was over. You’re only here for a short amount of time, and I’d hate for you to miss out on any opportunities.”

6. *“I’ve heard stories, and I don’t want to be hazed.”*

“We do not haze, period. I can tell you that (1) we don’t want somebody in our chapter who thinks that hazing is valuable, and (2) we recruit people who have enough self-confidence that they don’t need to degrade others or tell them what to do. We are adamantly opposed to hazing, and you will never be asked to do anything that would compromise the respect of the individual or the Fraternity.”

Be honest. SigEp does not tolerate hazing in any way, shape, or form. If you feel that your chapter is hazing, address the issue with an advisor or Headquarters staff person.

7. *“My friends who joined a fraternity last year won’t even talk to me anymore. They have become arrogant and only hang out with their ‘frat’ now.”*

“At SigEp, we don’t encourage alienation. In fact, we do the opposite. We want all of our members to get involved in other organizations on campus. SigEps are successful, in part, because of the strength of the relationships our members have outside of the Fraternity. You’ll have a better college experience, and that’s what it’s all about.”

8. *“I don’t drink.”*

“That’s a commendable and healthy choice. A responsible social life is part of a rewarding college experience. Many of the events we host have nothing to do with alcohol. Those which do are completely voluntary, and all laws are closely followed.”

9. *“I just don’t see myself fitting into a fraternity.”*

“Our diversity is one of our best assets. We are not looking for a group of guys who all dress the same, talk the same, and look the same. What type of challenge is there in joining a group of individuals exactly like yourself? The variety we have has added to our fraternity experience and helped us learn a great deal. Likewise, getting to know a diverse group of men will yield you great benefits.”

10. *“I don’t want to be associated with the ‘frat boy’ image.”*

“Unfortunately, the image that people see on TV and read about in the newspaper doesn’t tell an accurate story. Last year, we completed the following Balanced Man activities:

“This Fraternity is about friendship, personal development, and leadership.”

11. *“I’m not a jock or a party guy.”*

“SigEp does have the reputation of being an “athletes’ fraternity.” However, that is more because the ideals of teamwork, competition, and winning are things that translate well into fraternity life. We are constantly striving to be the best organization on this campus,

and feel that men who have a competitive drive will help us accomplish that goal, athlete or not.”

12. *“I’m already in an honors/service fraternity.”*

“Congratulations, we encourage all of our members to get involved on campus. We currently have Bob, Steve, and John involved in _____, and _____. Our involvement outside of SigEp has really helped us solidify our Fraternity as the best on campus. Our national Fraternity also has scholarships that award to campus leaders.

“Sound Mind and Sound Body are two areas on which SigEp places a great deal of emphasis. I think you will find that our organization promotes many of the same ideals that honors/service fraternities do in addition to much more. We are also looking to co-sponsor events with some of those organizations this year.”

13. *“I’m already in two student organizations.”*

See item 12.

14. *“I’m graduating in a year; what’s in it for me?”*

“The fraternity experience means different things to people at various times in their lives. Freshmen are often looking to get involved and meet people. Upperclassmen often look for an opportunity to build their résumé, take an immediate leadership position, or utilize networking contacts. Membership in SigEp is for a lifetime. The relationships you build will last long beyond your college years as well.”

15. *“All of my friends from high school are in Fraternity X.”*

“I assume you went away to college to meet new people. SigEp presents you with that opportunity. I have met some of my closest friends during my time here. On the other hand, we do work closely with all of the other chapters, and by joining SigEp that doesn’t mean you won’t spend time with guys in other fraternities. In fact, some of my best friends are in Fraternity X, Y, Z.”

16. *“My dad was in Fraternity X, and he wants me to join there.”*

“Having the opportunity to be part of a legacy is a unique opportunity. However, every individual must be able to make the best decision for himself. What was right for your dad may not be the best thing for you. We have guys who have been on both sides of the fence. Some of them are legacies and joined SigEp, while others joined a different organization from their fathers or brothers. What they found out is that there is still a special bond within the Greek world, whether or not it is within the same chapter.”

17. *“I want to wait and see who is who on campus (what type of guys I’ll be joining).”*

“I appreciate the fact that you want to be part of the best group on campus. I assure you that SigEp is one of the preeminent fraternities in North America (insert local and national facts and accomplishments here).”

This is probably the type of guy who is looking for something specific. Find out what it is (intramural, campus involvement, social preference) and drive it home.

18. *“The house is cool, but my dorm is really nice.”*

“The dorms are nice, and I’ve seen that it doesn’t come close to the overall fraternity experience. You can come back to the chapter house in 20 years and have a relationship with the people who live there. You can’t get that out of the dorms. The men really make the fraternity. I’ve found it’s really difficult to maintain relationships with the guys on a dorm floor.”

19. *“You guys don’t have a house.”*

“We have been very successful without a house. Most men join a fraternity for the people they met not because of a physical structure.”

Talk about any future house plans. Being a member of a chapter when a house is built is a special experience.

20. *“My girlfriend doesn’t like fraternities.”*

Explain all of the positive things that the Fraternity has to offer and invite the girlfriend over for some of the recruitment events. Introduce her to other brothers’ girlfriends who can tell her about the awesome SigEp experience. Also mention the formals and date functions that she can attend.